

Reports: U.S. document says Iranian financed Pan Am bombing

LONDON (AP) — U.S. intelligence officials believed a former Iranian interior minister paid \$10 million in cash and gold to finance the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 which killed 270 people, according to reports obtained by British newspapers.

The former minister, identified as Ayatollah Ali Akbar Mohtashami, was also founder of the Lebanese Hizbollah group, the Times of London reported in their Tuesday editions.

The report by the super-secret U.S. National Security Agency, written during the 1991 Gulf war and declassified Monday, raises fresh questions about the U.S. and British account of the bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, the Guardian newspaper wrote. The bombing killed all 259 people on the New York-bound plane and 11 on the ground.

Western intelligence agencies initially were reported to believe Iran commissioned a Syrian-based group, Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, to carry out the bombing after the United States accidentally shot down an Iranian airliner in July 1988.

But after a long investigation, that theory was sidelined and two Libyan intelligence officers, Abdul Basset Ali Al Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fimish, were charged by U.S. and British law enforcement officials with being behind the bombing. Libya denies involvement and has refused to hand them over for trial, prompting U.N. sanctions against Libya.

The Guardian quoted the report as saying: "Mohtashami is closely connected with the Al Abbas and Abu Nidal terrorist groups... he has recently paid \$10 million in cash and gold to these two organisations to carry out terrorist activities and was the one who paid the same amount to bomb Pan Am Flight 103 in retaliation for the U.S. shoot down of the Iranian Airliner."

The Guardian said the report was declassified after a request under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act by lawyers representing insurers of the now defunct Pan Am airline. The act allows the disclosure of many government documents.

The report was the one obtained by the makers of a

Seminar debates women's development

BY Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives of different sectors and institutions in the Kingdom and analysts on Tuesday discussed pressing problems facing development of women and population growth as a follow-up to the Cairo conference on population held in September.

But the heated debate was not over who is with or against women's rights, it was over the accuracy of the statistics and information given by the government.

In a speech entitled "Population in Jordan: Necessities of Development, Actual Figures and a Future Outlook," Musa Samha from the Jordan University presented an overall view of the changes that occurred in the last three decades in the social, economic and political fields.

According to Dr. Samha, foreigners represent 25 per cent of the labour force, there has been an increase in the use of contraceptives that has "probably" reached 40 per cent at present and unemployment in 1992 was estimated at 25 per cent.

Participants in the one-day seminar, which was organised by the Jordan Environment Society in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, took a special interest in analysing these figures, especially concerning unemployment. One participant ques-

tioned the lecturer over the accuracy of such a figure (25 per cent) since the "government's estimates show unemployment rates at 14 per cent."

Another participant asked how unemployment, which was estimated at 25 per cent two years ago, could have dropped to 14 per cent at present while there are strong signs of an increase in unemployment.

"Doubts are cast over all these estimates," Dr. Samha answered the queries. "Concerned authorities hide the real figures but the fact remains that the unemployment rate is quite high."

Another issue debated was that of foreign labour in the Kingdom. Dr. Samha criticised the Jordanian mentality in terms of how parents choose for their children the kind of specialties they should take as their careers.

"All parents want their children to become engineers and doctors and employ all means to do so," he said. "While Jordanian students are willing to work abroad in restaurants and cafes, they would not do such a thing in their own country."

Almost all participants agreed on the need to upgrade the status of women but stressed that policies should be independent of any foreign influence. In an opening speech, Walter Rudel, representing the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, highlighted the

Sheikh Isa says foreign elements behind unrest

MANAMA, Bahrain (Agencies) — The Emir of Bahrain said in an interview published Tuesday that intervention by neighbouring countries had sparked Shiite Muslim rioting in his country.

Making his first public comments on the disturbances which first erupted in December, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa stopped short of naming the neighbours allegedly behind the unrest.

But in the interview with the Saudi Arabian newspaper Al Ashraq Al Awsat he compared the Bahraini unrest to turmoil in Algeria and Egypt, which is widely blamed on Iranian-backed Muslim fundamentalists.

"There are foreign parties that we all know, who stand behind the painful incidents that took place in Bahrain," Sheikh Isa said.

"Regrettably, we are not the only ones for there are foreign parties that also direct the regrettable incidents in some Arab countries such as Algeria, Egypt and others."

"There are some neighbouring countries that interfere in our affairs. We may not be able to change or choose our neighbours, but this does not mean we will accept their interference in our internal affairs," he said.

"That is an issue which we cannot tolerate at all," Sheikh Isa added, without disclosing his options.

Street riots flared in Bahrain for two weeks in December and erupted anew last week. They were the worst trouble to hit Bahrain since an abortive coup plot blamed on Iran in 1981.

Bahrain recalled its ambassador from Tehran for consultations during the December unrest.

Bahraini authorities last week announced that they had deported an unspecified number of "infiltrators from abroad," accusing them of fomenting the unrest in mainly Shiite suburbs.

The authorities gave no names for the deportees but Sheikh Ali Salman and two



The Royal Highness Princess... over a meeting of ministers

Princess E... women's

IRBID (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma... members representing the Governorate of Irbid and members of the women's committees in the Irbid region to review issues of concern to women.

Discussion covered draft laws currently before the Lower House of Parliament designed to promote the role of women and increase their participation in public life.

Addressing the meeting, the Princess said that the women's committees in the governorate have been created to help women present their demands to Parliament. The Princess suggested that the committees prepare periodic reports covering

U.S. warns Syria over 'terrorists'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Secretary of State Warren Christopher has urged Syria to stop providing safe haven for "terrorist" groups in the wake of a bombing Jan. 22 in Israel, the acting spokesman of the State Department said.

At least 19 people were killed and more than 60 were wounded when two bombs exploded minutes apart at a bus packed with Israeli military personnel near Nariya, in central Israel. The Islamic Jihad has claimed responsibility for the bombings.

Spokeswoman Christine Shelly noted that President Clinton issued "a very clear statement in reaction to the tragedy, condemning in the strongest possible terms the act of terrorist violence and calling upon those who have chosen the path of peace to condemn this act and to redouble all of their efforts to achieve a secure and lasting peace."

A Scottish newspaper, the Daily Record, said the United States knew of Iran's involvement more than four years ago, before Britain and the United States issued arrest warrants in 1991 for the two alleged Libyao agents.

Tough U.N. sanctions have been imposed on Libya for refusing to hand over the men accused of being solely responsible for placing the bomb on the Boeing Jumbo jet.

The Daily Record accused the United States of covering up details and added it was inconceivable Britain was not aware that the Lockerbie attack was revenge for the shootdown of an Iranian airliner by the American warship Vincennes in 1988.

Damascus is one of the reasons that Syria remains on the U.S. terrorism list. We raised this matter repeatedly with the Syrians and at the highest levels," she said.

The secretary also sent messages to both Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres expressing his condolences and horror over the terrorist attack. Ms. Shelly told reporters.

"We have been in touch with others in the region," she said, including Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mr. Arafat was urged "to do all in his power to preempt and control the activities of those who carry out these acts of terror and to apprehend and punish the perpetrators in areas under his authority," the acting spokeswoman said.

"It is a tragic incident. We share the feeling and anger that the Israelis feel at this type of event," she told questioners, noting that the Israeli government, in a cabinet meeting late Jan. 22, decided to carry out their negotiations with the PLO.

"As the president and the secretary stated in their messages to Prime Minister Rabin, we must continue the peace process," Ms. Shelly said. "To do otherwise would hand the terrorist the greatest victory. Indeed, des-

troying the hopes for peace is exactly what the terrorists are seeking," she declared.

"What we're trying to do is move the process forward and show those who wish to destroy the peace process that they cannot do that, that they will not be successful," the acting spokeswoman said.

"That's also the signal that the Israeli government, as recently as last night, has given."

While the United States looks to the participants in the Middle East peace process to signal their intentions, the United States will continue to facilitate contacts between the parties. "Certainly we believe that the contacts that we have helped to facilitate are an important part of that process," Ms. Shelly said, but she declined to get into a detailed discussion of the contacts.

The acting spokeswoman declined to characterise the Syrian side of the conversation between Mr. Christopher and Mr. Sharaa. She acknowledged she has not personally seen any "public, official response on the part of the Syrians. But there's obviously something we'll be interested in seeing," she added.

Pressed by reporters on the issue of whether or not the Palestinian authority headed by Mr. Arafat is doing enough to curb "terrorists," Ms. Shelly said statements

Israeli U.N. envoy urges cutting of links with Iran

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Israeli U.N. envoy Gad Yaacobi said on Monday the international community should cut all economic, arms and technology links with Iran in response to what he called Tehran's role in threatening many Middle East countries.

"Any direct or indirect support for Iran has to be stopped," he told reporters after sending a letter to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali giving details of a suicide bombing on Sunday north of Tel Aviv which killed 19 Israelis and wounded more than 60.

Mr. Yaacobi said the bombing was carried out by two Palestinian members of the militant Islamic Jihad movement from Gaza and that it would be ridiculous to say they were personally dispatched by Iran.

But he added: "The question is: Who is supporting the Islamic Jihad... who is the supporter of those organisations, who is supplying them with finance, the arms, the training, who is encouraging them to do that?"

The Israeli envoy said: "Any economic cooperation with Iran has to be stopped. Any supply of equipment, armaments, technology, has to be stopped, unless the

Minister an... plans for Je

ERASH (Petra) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Ishaidat Tuesday said ministry teams will start searching for water resources and drilling artesian wells in Jerash Governorate to help increase water supplies for residents.

Speaking during an inspection tour of the Jerash and Ajloun regions, Dr. Ishaidat said the ministry completed a study on a sewerage project for Souf town and Souf refugee camp, noting that the project would cost JD 4.2 million provided in loan form from the World Bank.

He said the ministry plans to purchase equipment specifically for use in the governorates outside Amman to help in water resources development and management.

The minister was replying to complaints presented by two Lower House deputies representing Jerash Governorate.

Miftah Rubeini and Suleiman Saad outlined the needs of the local citizens, particularly the water shortage and

Fuel heat... kill 2 w

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two people died Monday in two separate incidents involving kerosene heaters, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police reports.

In the first incident, a 75-year-old woman died in a Quiesmech when a lit kerosene heater fell on her mattress.

The victim's son told police that the heating unit was near his mother who was sleeping when it was accidentally knocked over by the victim, the report said.

According to the report, the fire spread quickly in the house and the victim, a 75-year-old woman, suffered third degree burns and died before reaching the hospital.

Also in Mafrqa, a 45-year-old bedouin woman died in a fire started when a kerosene heater fell in a tent. Police and CDD reports said.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the victim, Salmeh Suleiman, lived alone in the tent.

| JORDAN TELEVISION | |
|---|------------------------|
| Tel: 773111-19 | |
| PROGRAMME TWO | |
| 17:00 | Diplodo |
| 17:30 | Musique Sans Frontiers |
| 18:30 | News in French |
| 19:30 | Home Improvement |
| 19:45 | E=Mc |
| 20:00 | Law and Order |
| 21:30 | The Cinderella |
| 22:00 | News in English |
| 22:30 | Prim |
| 22:40 | Snowy River |
| 22:59 | Keeping Up Appearances |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| 05:09 | Fajr |
| 06:29 | (Sunrise) Duha |
| 11:48 | Dhuhr |
| 14:42 | Asr |
| 17:06 | Maghrib |
| 18:26 | Isha |
| CHURCHES | |
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church 5-Walid, Tel. 810740 | |
| Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632745 | |
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440 | |
| St. Sule Church Tel. 661757 | |
| Transcendental Church Tel. 622366 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541 | |
| Anglican Church Tel. 630651, Tel. 623543 | |
| Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 | |
| Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561 | |
| St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 | |
| Armenian International Church Tel. 625226 | |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624325 | |
| Law and Order | |
| German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195 | |
| The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 624932 | |
| Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691 | |
| The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295 | |
| WEATHER | |
| It will be sunny with clouds appearing at low altitudes. Temperatures will be around average and winds southeasterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly active and seas choppy. | |
| Min./Max. temp. Amman 2/12 | |

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

| AGABA | | HOSPITALS | | FOR THE TRAVELLER | |
|---|--------|---------------------------|-----------|--|--------------------------|
| Agaba | 8:19 | AMMAN: | | 23:05 | Athens (OA) |
| Desert | 0:14 | Hussein Medical Centre | 613613/32 | 23:20 | Amsterdam (KL) |
| Jordan Valley | 0:21 | Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn | 644281/8 | DEPARTURES | |
| Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent. | | Akileh Maternity, J. Amn | 64241/2 | ROYAL JORDANIAN (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) | |
| USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS | | Jabal Amman Maternity | 642562 | 07:30 | Agaba (RJ) |
| NIGHT DUTY | | Malhas, J. Amman | 636140 | 08:30 | Jeddah (RJ) |
| AMMAN: | | Palatone, Shireen | 664171-4 | 08:35 | Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) |
| Dr. Fakhr Tayeh | 885880 | University Hospital | 658045 | 09:05 | Larnaca (RJ) |
| Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikha | 752405 | Al-Musheir Hospital | 667279 | 10:00 | Amsterdam, New York (RJ) |
| Dr. Nidal Al Dalieh | 527195 | The Islamic, Adhah | 666127-7 | 10:30 | Tunis, Casablanca (RJ) |
| Dr. Bassam Kurdi | 79200 | Al-Ahli, Abdallah | 664144 | 11:05 | Istanbul (RJ) |
| Firas pharmacy | 661912 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 11:10 | Colombo (RJ) |
| Ferdous pharmacy | 778336 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 19:30 | Beirut (RJ) |
| Al Asma pharmacy | 637055 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 19:40 | Agaba, Cairo (RJ) |
| Narokh pharmacy | 625872 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 20:00 | Riyadh (RJ) |
| Al Salem pharmacy | 637630 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 20:30 | Aden (RJ) |
| Yacoub pharmacy | 649485 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 20:45 | Amsterdam (KL) |
| Stemecian pharmacy | 637640 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 21:25 | Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ) |
| Najrouh pharmacy | 626372 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | 22:45 | Sanaa (RJ) |
| Najib pharmacy | 847632 | Al-Bashe, J. Ashraf | 751101-3 | Other Flights (Terminal 2) | |
| He added, however: "so far there is no cooperation between Israeli police and the Palestinian self-rule authority's force in the fight against drugs." | | Zaqqa Govt. Hospital | 09493233 | 07:45 | Beirut (IME) |
| Each force operates within its own area." | | Zaqqa National Hospital | 09493233 | 10:20 | Cairo (MS) |
| Traffickers from both sides had set up various points of sale and circulation for drugs at entrances to Arab East Jerusalem and inside the city. | | Ibn Sina Hospital | 09493233 | 11:30 | Sanaa (SV) |
| These points, called Tahannut in Hebrew, operated during the day and in the evening." | | Al-Hajja Modern Hospital | 09493233 | 13:30 | Jeddah (SV) |
| In the past, the Israeli police arrested many soldiers who dealt in drugs from Lebanon, through networks which included both Israelis and Arabs, he said. | | IBRD: | | 07:45 | Abu Dhabi, Sharjah (AF) |
| During the intifada from 1987 onwards, some Israeli drug dealers and consumers ventured "at the risk of their lives" into Palestinian areas | | Process Baza Hospital | 0275555 | 08:30 | Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK) |
| | | Greek Calabro Hospital | 0275575 | 09:20 | Amsterdam (KL) |
| | | Al-Nabtes Hospital | 02757100 | 09:45 | Athens (OA) |
| | | IBRD: | | 17:00 | Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK) |
| | | Dr. Al Shouqari | 246140 | 19:05 | Larnaca (CY) |
| | | Al Quds pharmacy | (—) | EMERGENCIES | |

| HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Dep. Amman | 8:00 a.m. every Monday |
| Arr. Damascus | 5:30 p.m. every Monday |
| Dep. Damascus | 7:30 a.m. every Sunday |
| Arr. Amman | 5:00 p.m. every Sunday |
| MARKET PRICES | |
| Upper/lower price in fils per kg. | |
| Apple | 700/400 |
| Banana | 680 |
| Banana (Mukammal) | 620 |
| Cabbage | 180/100 |
| Carrot | 240/140 |
| Cauliflower | 120/60 |
| Cucumbers (large) | 300/100 |
| Cucumbers (small) | 420/200 |
| Eggplant | 300/200 |
| Garlic | 300/200 |
| Grapefruit | 300/200 |
| Lemon | 300/180 |
| Marrow (large) | 180/100 |
| Marrow (small) | 320/200 |
| Onion (green) | 320/200 |
| Onion (dry) | 320/200 |
| Orange | 700/500 |
| Pepper (hot) | 700/300 |
| Pepper (sweet) | 360/200 |
| Potato | 320/200 |
| Radish | 160/100 |
| Spinach | 150/100 |
| String Beans | 850/400 |
| Tomato | 330/150 |



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma presides over a meeting of ministers, deputies and women from local panels in Irbid Governorate (Petra photo)

Princess Basma discusses women's concerns in Irbid

IRBID (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday met here with Parliament members representing the Governorate of Irbid and members of the women's committees in the Irbid region to review issues of concern to women.

Discussion covered draft laws currently before the Lower House of Parliament designed to promote the role of women and increase their participation in public life.

Addressing the meeting, the Princess said that the women's committees in the governorate have been created to help women present their demands to Parliament.

The Princess suggested that the committees prepare periodic reports covering women's needs in the governorates for presentation to the Lower House for follow up.

A dialogue took place among the participants at the meeting which included ministers and House Deputies from Irbid Governorate.

Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said the ministry, in a bid to curb unemployment among women in the governorate, will conduct a survey in order to later provide women with training in skills needed in the local market.

The minister said the survey will be conducted in cooperation with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) and the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), Yarmouk University and community colleges in the Irbid region.

Nader Thubeirat, minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment, told the meeting that his ministry will employ several qualified handicapped women in departments related to his ministry.

Deputies from the region aired their views concerning the needs of women in their region, emphasising the importance of women's roles in socio-economic development.

Minister of Health Aref Batayneh and Minister of Labour Nader Abu Sha'ar were also present at the meeting.

Minister announces water supply plans for Jerash, Ajloun areas

JERASH (Petra) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irsheidat Tuesday said ministry teams will start searching for water resources and drilling artesian wells in Jerash Governorate to help increase water supplies for residents.

Speaking during an inspection tour of the Jerash and Ajloun regions, Dr. Irsheidat said the ministry completed a study on a sewerage project for Souf town and Souf refugee camp, noting that the project would cost JD 4.2 million provided in loan form from the World Bank.

He said the ministry plans to purchase equipment specifically for use in the governorates outside Amman to help in water resources development and management.

The minister was replying to complaints presented by two Lower House deputies representing Jerash Governorate.

Mifteh Ruheimi and Suleiman Saad outlined the needs of the local citizens, particularly the water shortage and several problems encountered by sheep farmers.

They also demanded that the ministry lay sewerage networks for Souf and Sakeb towns and Souf refugee camp.

Dr. Irsheidat also listened to the views of the director of the Water Department in Irbid Governorate, Ali Qudah, and the director of the Jerash Water Department, Abdul Hamid Abu Issa.



Saleh Irsheidat

Earlier, the minister inspected two water projects in the neighbouring Ajloun Governorate.

Addressing a meeting at the governor's office, Dr. Irsheidat repeated that the Kingdom was facing a growing shortage of water largely due to the increasing population.

The water supplies available in Jordan are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of expanding agricultural and industrial development, and therefore, economising on water use has become a necessity, Dr. Irsheidat said.

Referring to the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the minister said that although Jordan has secured its water rights, it is in no position to benefit from these rights because it lacks the sufficient number of dams and areas to store the additional amounts of water, but it is continually seeking to ensure water for the increasing agricultural and industrial projects via several available means.

Regent meets with Gaza commerce group

'Full preparation required for economic summit in Amman'

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday reiterated Jordan's continuous support for the Palestinian people and urged more cooperation in the various areas of commerce.

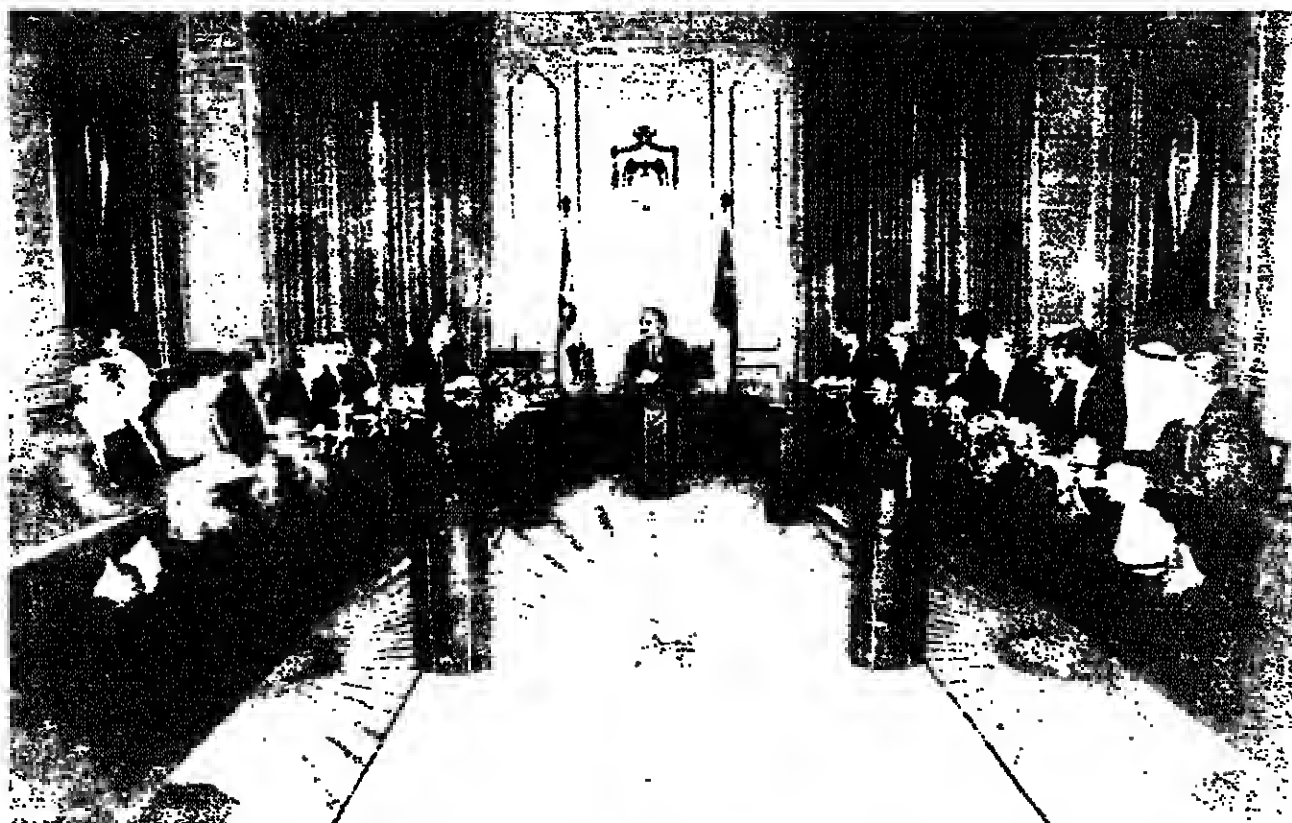
Addressing a meeting of members of the Chamber of Commerce responsible for commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors in the Gaza Strip, the Crown Prince stressed the need for the Gaza chamber and Jordanian chambers to conclude agreements that would strengthen bridges of cooperation between the two sides at the regional and international levels.

Referring to the next economic Middle Eastern summit to be held in Amman this year, Prince Hassan said that chambers on both sides should prepare for this important gathering, which will tackle investment, banking and infrastructure matters, in order to devise practical recommendations for submission to the coming conference.

Saying that the two sides should remain optimistic because of the prospects of progress in the era of peace, the Crown Prince stressed the need for close and serious coordination between the two sides in matters of concern to their joint economic endeavours.

The Gaza chamber president, Mohammad Qudweh, said that the chamber deeply appreciates His Majesty King Hussein's stand in support of the Palestinian people and the facilities offered by Jordan to the Gaza Strip residents in all spheres.

Mr. Qudweh noted that his team's visit to Jordan, to conclude agreements on



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday meets with members of a Gazan chamber of commerce delegation (Petra photo)

mumal cooperation in economic, industrial and trade matters, reflects the chamber's desire to advance the strong ties between the two sides and safeguard their national interests.

President of the Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce Haidar Murad, who last week signed with Mr. Qudweh an agreement on promoting investments and trade, said at the meeting that the two sides have agreed on measures to conduct joint programmes in trade, economic and investment areas.

Mr. Murad said that the

federation will send a team soon on a visit to the Palestinian chambers to follow up on coordination, study ways to attract foreign investments and agree on topics that would be presented by the private sectors in the two countries to the Amman economic conference.

JBA to send team to Syria for economic, trade talks

AMMAN (I.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) announced Tuesday that it was sending a delegation to Damascus early next month to discuss means of stimulating economic, trade and investment relations between the private sectors in Syria and Jordan.

The delegation, to be led by JBA Chairman Hamdi Tabbaa, will take place in response to an invitation by the Syrian Chambers of Commerce and the Syrian Businessmen's Association, said a JBA statement.

At least 30 Jordanians from the trade, industry, banking consultancy, contracting and tourist offices will be among the members of the delegation which is expected to sign an agreement on the founding of a joint Jordanian-Syrian business council to serve as a framework for mutual cooperation, the statement said.

The visit to Damascus comes close on the heels of a visit by Jordanian Businessmen to Iraq earlier this month when they discussed advancing economic and trade ties.

The JBA also said that it was making arrangements for JBA teams to visit Spain,



Hamdi Tabbaa

France and Denmark in the near future to discuss the implementation of agreements on joint business councils recently set up with the business communities in these countries.

A JBA statement said that talks with business communities in these countries will focus on tourism, economic and trade investments and the prospects of implementing joint ventures.

Apart from the three European countries, the JBA last year signed agreements for establishing joint business councils with Malaysia and Turkey, the statement said.

Legislation bureau studies 'stringent' draft traffic law

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Legislation Bureau at the Prime Ministry is studying the new draft traffic law presented by the Central Traffic Committee recently to amend some of the existing traffic rules in order to curb traffic accidents in the Kingdom, said a bureau official Tuesday.

The step follows His Majesty King Hussein's call on Jan. 11, for urgent action to end the chaos on the Kingdom's roads. The King had stressed that traffic problems will be one of the main priorities of the government's programme of reorganisation.

"The new proposed law is one of our main priorities and we are conducting continuous meetings with the concerned traffic officials to examine the new proposed law," an official at the bureau said.

He told the Jordan Times that the office will study the legal aspects of the draft law, then if it is approved it will be presented to a ministerial committee for consideration and approval. "Then the draft will be sent to the Cabinet and Parliament for approval," he said.

"We are trying to speed up the process so that hopefully within the next few months the traffic law will be amended and put into effect," the official said.

The draft law stipulates that the fine for passing a red light will be JD 50 to 200, or 7 to 90 days in jail.

The draft suggests three months to one year jail terms for violations such as fleeing the scene of an accident, driving while intoxicated, using forged numbered plates and driving with a suspended licence.

In addition the proposed law suggests imposing higher fines up to JD 100 for wrongful overtaking, speeding and disposing litter, oil, solid and other materials on the Kingdom's streets and highways.

Moreover, repeated violations, death-related accidents and driving while intoxicated will lead to the suspension of driving licences, and jail terms in some cases.

Minister of Interior Salameh Hammad recently blamed motorists for the majority of road accidents and called for enacting new

legislation that would help reduce such accidents, including a point system for frequent violators.

Mr. Hammad also urged the Ministry of Public Works to correct dangerous road junctions and improve the overall safety of roads.

According to statistics released by the Traffic Department, 12,516 people were injured in 26,837 road accidents in 1994. These accidents also claimed the lives of 443 people.

Of these accidents, 4,752 were cases where pedestrians were run over by motorists. In those accidents alone, 192 people were killed, including 38 children between the ages of 5 and 10 and 60 children under the age of five.

The statistics also showed that 1,081,803 traffic citations were issued last year.

Failure to stop at stop signs represented 33 per cent of the total number of traffic violations with 357,367 citations, while vehicle inspections on the road resulted in the issuance of 144,744 citations, representing 13.4 per cent of the total.

Fuel heater fires kill 2 women

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two people died Monday in two separate incidents involving kerosene heaters, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police reports.

In the first incident, a 73-year-old woman died in Quiesmeb when a lit kerosene heater fell on her mattress.

The victim's son told police that the heating unit was near the mattress where his mother was sleeping when it was accidentally knocked over by the victim, the report said.

According to the report, the fire spread quickly in the house and the victim, Fatmeh Ali, suffered third degree burns and died before reaching the hospital.

Also in Mafrqa, a 45-year-old bedouin woman died in a fire started when a lit kerosene heater fell inside her tent, police and CDD reports said.

According to the report, the fire destroyed all the woman's belongings. Ms. Saleman suffered second degree burns and died shortly after being brought to Mafrqa Hospital.

The police report said that autopsies will be performed on both women to determine the cause of death.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, two people were in coma and five people were listed in fair condition after inhaling carbon monoxide in Jabal Nadif in Amman, CDD reports said.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the 10 family members went to sleep on Monday night and left a diesel heater lit in a small room.

The official said that a neighbour noticed smoke emitting from the windows and alerted the CDD.

All 10 people were rushed to Al Bashir Hospital. A hospital official told the Jordan Times that the two victims who are in coma are expected to survive, and that the rest of the family are expected to be discharged from hospital today.

Government may switch new pensions to SSC

By Ian Atalla

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government is expected to move soon to curb a substantial source of public spending by switching pensions of new civil servants out of the government budget and into the Social Security Corporation (SSC), according to the director of the Ministry of Finance's Public Budget Department, Abdul Rahman Ajlouni.

"It is not certain, but personally, I believe the government will go that way," said Mr. Ajlouni.

The government's 1995 budget projects spending on pensions for retirees from public service, both civilian and military, at JD 160 million. With another

320,000 people currently on government payrolls in various capacities, according to Mr. Ajlouni, the task of providing for current and future pensioners has become an increasing chore for the treasury.

"The government is suffering from the pension bill," Mr. Ajlouni said. Besides this consideration, he added, if future civil servants had their pensions tied to the SSC instead of the government budget, "they would have more mobility to go into the private sector, without losing the years they have spent in the government working towards their pension."

Currently the SSC, a public-sector company which began operations in 1980, covers pension allocations for approximately 280,000 workers in

9,200 different organisations, according to an SSC report issued earlier this month. The vast majority of those covered by the corporation, however, are private sector employees.

Mr. Ajlouni explicitly emphasised that "we will not force any civil servants" to look into private sector employment.

According to the president of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Abdullah Ulayan, the CSC currently has 102,000 employment applications on file while job openings number only around 2,000 — over 60 per cent of which are for teaching posts with the Ministry of Education. Thus, the market for any new civil service jobs is "extremely tight," said the least, Dr. Ulayan noted.

Prominent economist Fahd Fanek, known for his staunch beliefs in fiscal conservatism, advocates one unified, government-controlled pension fund.

"It would shake up the country's bureaucracy and be an excellent move," said Dr. Fanek.

If the decision were in his hands, Dr. Fanek said, "I would not only transfer new hires, but all of the existing civil service workforce to the SSC as well."

SSC pensions are supported by subscription rates amounting to 15 per cent of an employee's salary, two-thirds of which is paid for by the employer and the rest is taken directly from the employee's salary. Thus, "the real cost of paying the pensions" would be accomplished in advance, as opposed to the current pension funding for civil servants via the government budget, Dr. Fanek said.

"Thus there would be no piling up of pension commitments in the national budget as there is at present. This commitment is taking on the level of a real national debt," Dr. Fanek added.

According to Dr. Ulayan, "recommendations from international and regional institutions" support phasing pensions of new civil servants out of the government budget, and urge a freeze in giving any classified civil service contracts to new hires "to prevent further inflation in the size of the civil service labour pool."

"The consideration of

the burden on the public treasury is important," said Dr. Ulayan. "But we should also pay attention to how civil service employees will themselves be affected."

Financial researcher Ahmad Nammari took a similar stance.

"If it would help lighten the public debt, I would say that it is definitely not a mistake to switch the pension coverage over to the SSC. However, care should be taken to fully maintain any benefits and privileges which civil servants currently have when such a move is made."

As for when the government would make such a move or not, Mr. Ajlouni said that would happen as soon as the official civil service manning tables for 1995 are issued.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Culture and Art at 6:30 p.m.

THIRD JORDANIAN DRAMA FESTIVAL

Two plays (in Arabic) entitled "The Goat Island" and "Coloured Rain" respectively at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILM

Film entitled "Licence To Kill" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

POETRY RECITAL

Poetry recital by Marwan Hamdan, Ahmad Kanani, and Mohammad Zaki at the Phoenix Gallery for

LECTURE

Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "A Reading in the Literature of Travels" by Mr. Ziyad Al Hashemi at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of Children's works (from Haya Centre drawing and painting classes) at Goethe Institute. Exhibition of works by Iraqi artist Fakhr Muhammad at the Ab'ad Art Gallery.

EMBASSY OF INDIA AMMAN

REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held on Thursday, January 26, 1995 at 10 a.m. at the premises of the Embassy of India, First Circle Jabal Amman (Opp. Malhas Hospital).

All Indians with their family members are cordially invited to attend the function.

North Korea to put 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods in concrete

Officers summoned for Pyongyang military rally

SEOUL, South Korea (Agencies) — North Korea has agreed to put 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods in concrete as part of a new nuclear deal with the United States, a diplomatic source in Seoul said Tuesday.

The South Korean source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the agreement was made at six days of U.S.-North Korea talks that ended in Pyongyang Monday.

The fate of the 8,000 spent fuel rods that North Korea unilaterally removed from its experimental 5-megawatt nuclear reactor last May was a key issue of contention left after the Oct. 21 U.S.-North Korea nuclear deal.

Experts have warned that reprocessing of the 8,000 spent fuel rods, being kept temporarily in a cooling pond, could give the communist North enough weapons-grade plutonium to make four to five atomic bombs.

At the Pyongyang talks that began last Wednesday, the United States and North Korea reached agreement on all technical issues related to dry storage of the fuel rods, the South Korean source said.

The source said a team of U.S. specialists, joined by experts from the U.N. International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA), is expected to begin work on the dry storage as early as next week.

Experts say dry concrete is one of the safest ways of storing spent fuel rods to prevent them from corroding and giving off radioactivity. The rods could erode if kept in the cooling ponds.

North Korea's official news agency said Monday the U.S.-North Korea talks in Pyongyang resulted in "significant progress." It did not report details.

Under the Oct. 21 nuclear framework agreement, the North's spent fuel rods to be kept in dry concrete must be transferred to a third country by 2002, when the first of two new modern reactors is built in the North.

The second reactor is scheduled to be completed one year later.

The two U.S.-arranged light-water reactors, worth \$4 billion, are a key part of the framework agreement, under which North Korea must freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear programme, suspected of being used for weapons development.

In addition, North Korea also is to receive substitute fuel oil and limited U.S. diplomatic recognition. As a first step toward normalising relations, the United States and North Korea have agreed to exchange liaison offices.

Meanwhile, monitors in Seoul Tuesday said North Korea has summoned ideology vanguard officers into its tightly controlled capital for a major military rally this week to solicit loyalty to their new leader, Kim Jong-il.

In a broadcast monitored here Monday, North Korea's official media reported the arrival in Pyongyang of army vanguards responsible for ideological indoctrination, said the South's official monitoring agency, Naewoe Press.

It would be the biggest military rally since the death of North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung in July by field officers who have played a key role in consolidating the succession to power of the junior Kim.

"The rally, revived for the first time in 12 years, also appears aimed at preventing ideological agitation within the military following Kim Il-Sung's death in July," a Naewoe analyst told AFP.

The previous rally was held in 1983 with some 6,000 officers summoned to take a loyalty oath to the junior Kim before his official debut in China as the successor to his charismatic father.

The junior Kim, accompanied by top military leaders, attended the 1983 rally in a show of leadership over the North's powerful armed

forces.

Experts here believe the junior Kim will face no difficulties in biding power, despite incessant rumours spawned by his rare appearances and failure to formally assume the posts of state president and general party secretary held by his father.

"Our immediate concern is about whether Kim Jong-il would show up," the Naewoe analyst said.

North rejects Northeast Asian security dialogue

In another development, Monday, North Korea said it was opposed to regional talks aimed at promoting a security dialogue among northeast Asian countries, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

"We oppose the appearance of any multilateral 'forum of security dialogue' in this region," a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the agency in a dispatch monitored here.

The forum was proposed earlier this month by Japanese Defence Agency Director-General Tokuchiro Tamazawa, who said he wanted China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia and the United States to discuss security in northeast Asia.



PRO-LIFE VS. PRO-CHOICE: Thousands of the 22nd anniversary of the Supreme Court's pro-life demonstrators march in downtown Washington Monday on the way to the U.S. Supreme Court Building. The march marks

Clinton offers his 'vision' to Congress and the nation

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton planned to use his state of the Union Address late Tuesday night to outline his agenda and vision for the nation and draw political battlelines with the new Republican-controlled Congress.

Mr. Clinton was to deliver the nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress at 9 p.m. EST (0200 GMT) — the first time in four decades that a Democratic president faces both a Senate and House of Representatives under Republican control.

"The president's speech will be a good opportunity for him to lay the premise, in a sense the vision for his leadership and to describe in some detail the type of initiatives that he would see accomplishing that vision," White House press secretary Mike McCurry told reporters.

The address is unlikely to call for any of the bold changes Mr. Clinton demanded when he first came to Washington two years ago — when he called for a sweeping overhaul of the nation's health care system.

Aides said Mr. Clinton favours increasing the minimum wage, which now stands at \$4.25 an hour — most likely to a \$5 hourly rate. It was unclear, however, whether he would make the proposal part of the Tuesday

night speech or use another forum to unveil the plan.

He was also expected to use the address to generate public support for the administration's package of \$40 billion in loan guarantees to help Mexico out of its current currency crisis.

Although Republican leaders back the loan package, it has encountered stiff opposition among rank-and-file lawmakers who fear it lacks public support in the United States.

Aides said Mr. Clinton also was expected to call for increasing the size of the U.S. border patrol in order to cut down on the number of illegal immigrants entering the United States from Latin America.

Immigration has become a politically sensitive issue, particularly following voter approval in California of Proposition 187, which cuts off social services to illegal aliens. Its implementation has been delayed by court order.

Mr. Clinton was also expected to promote the steps he has taken to streamline the size of the federal government and his plans to further reduce the bureaucracy.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich, discussing the address, told reporters, "we are trying on some fronts to work very closely together," with Mr. Clinton, even

though "we have real disagreements."

"I would hope that there will be a spirit of comity," Mr. Gingrich said, pointing out that "this is not the state of the Democratic Party, this is the state of the whole country. It's the president addressing the entire nation, and we'll see what we can take out of it."

Mr. Clinton was hoping to reassert his leadership role after weeks of attention focusing on the new Republican leaders of Congress — who last held the reins of power in both chambers 40 years ago.

White House officials, however, sought to downplay the stakes for Mr. Clinton — who has shouldered much of the blame for the Democratic debacle in the November elections.

"There is often a temptation to label major speeches by the president of the United States make or break speeches," Mr. McCurry said. "I don't believe President Clinton views this state of the Union Address in that fashion."

He said Mr. Clinton sees the speech as an "opportunity for him to outline in a very direct way to the American people and to our Congress the type of leadership that he believes... will get us to the vision of America that he has effectively described."

Soares holds key as opposition calls for new elections

LISBON (AFP) — Portugal's opposition parties called for early general elections Tuesday after Monday's announcement by Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva that he would step down in October.

Opposition leaders pressed President Mario Soares to dissolve parliament so elections could be held eight months early, a clamour echoed by Portugal's press.

Cavaco Silva is the longest-serving Prime Minister in the 15-nation European Union. He was elected in October 1985, only five months after being elected leader of the Social Democrat Party (SDP).

He said he would make way for a new party leader to be elected at the party congress in just over three weeks' time, but he added that between now and October he would continue to work "unflinchingly as prime minister by implementing the government programme approved by parliament," where his party has an absolute majority.

The general secretary of the main opposition Socialist Party, Antonio Guterres, said a government still led by Cavaco Silva after the congress, could not be considered as a "government of management."

"The country can not lose time," Mr. Guterres said, adding that it was in the national interest that early elections be held.

His party, however, will first have to elect a new president at its annual congress in mid-February.

The Communist Party, which has put down a par-

liamentary motion of censure against the government for Thursday and Friday, said the economic and social conditions in the country continued to worsen, as well as workers' rights.

"The country can not continue to live in a situation which will be more and more unstable until October," Party General Secretary Carlos Carvalhal said.

The sentiment is shared by most Portuguese economists, employers confederations and unions.

The current instability in the country, they say, means important economic decisions are being postponed.

The president of the Portuguese Industrial Association, the country's highest employers' association said parliament should be dissolved and the government should resign.

Ludgero Marques said that even if the prime minister and his cabinet continued in office, "he would not be able to prevent disturbances in the economic forces which can have very negative effects."

"The weakness of the government is not desirable," particularly at a time when Portuguese unemployment has reached record levels. Oliveira Costa, leader of the General Workers' Union (UGT) said.

Another union leader, Manuel Carvalho da Silva of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers, the communist CGTP, said "the captain has quit the ship after creating 'expectations and illusions' with promises that his policies couldn't

Bomb hurled at Zia's motorcade

DHAKA (Agencies) — A crude bomb was hurled Tuesday at a motorcade carrying Bangladesh Prime Minister Khawaja Zia after she inaugurated an international investors' conference, but no one was injured, witnesses said.

An AFP photographer on the scene said the bomb did not hit any of the cars in the motorcade, which sped away towards Ms. Zia's office. The bomb exploded on the road, letting out smoke. Police fired tear gas and used batons to disperse opposition strike activists and arrested several people, witnesses said.

The incident followed a half-day general strike against inflation, one in a lengthy series of strikes the opposition has called in its efforts to bring about early elections under a neutral caretaker government. The strike coincided with the EuroMoney International Investors' Conference, which focused on business opportunities in Bangladesh.

Thousands of police and paramilitary forces guarded the streets and cordoned off the Sonargaon Hotel, the venue of the conference. As investors gathered, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman urged the opposition to call off its general strike and spare the economy.

Schools, shops and businesses were shut, and vehicles, except for three-wheel pedicabs, stayed off the streets.

Police escorted ministers and guests to the site of the conference, the first ever to focus exclusively on Bangladesh.

The opposition has come under fire from the business community for calling strikes for Tuesday and Wednesday.

Sheikh Hasina Wajed, Bangladesh's main opposition leader, said the strike was a protest against an unusual increase in the price of consumer goods ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which starts in February.

Ramadan is a month of daytime fasts that are usually followed by after-dark feasts, and large quantities of food are consumed during this period.

The nationwide general strike planned for Wednesday was to push the opposition's 10-month-old demand for elections under a neutral caretaker government to ensure people's voting rights, Ms. Wajed said.

"We are not against investment. We love this country," but development should take place in a "sound political system," she said.

Opposition MPs from Ms. Wajed's Awami League, deposed president Hussain Mohammad Ershad's Jatiya Party and the Muslim fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party resigned from parliament Dec. 28 after boycotting it since March.

Nasrin's trial put off In another development Monday, a court for the second time postponed the blasphemy trial of Taslima Nasrin, the Bangladeshi author who fled to Sweden to escape death threats by Islamic radicals.

The postponement until Feb. 9 came when prosecutors failed to produce a government statement allowing her trial.

Under Bangladesh laws, the government's assent is required if the offence is committed in a foreign country.

Jamaica's ruling party opposes casinos

KINGSTON (R) — Jamaica's ruling People's National Party has voted against the introduction of casino gambling, the Caribbean News Agency reported Monday. The party's policy-making council voted at the weekend against a resolution which would have reviewed the licensing of casino gambling, CANA said. Business interests have mounted a campaign to legalise casino gambling, which they claim would inject millions of tourist dollars into the Caribbean island's economy. The controversial proposal is opposed by church leaders.

Big no longer beautiful in weight watch island kingdom

SUVA, Fiji (AP) — Once upon a time, big was beautiful in the tiny south Pacific island Kingdom of Tonga. Now, fat is out. Alarmed by recent survey results showing increasing obesity among its 105,000 people, officials have launched a weight awareness campaign. A national slimming competition is among measures planned to encourage a healthy, weight-watching. Its head of state, 76-year-old King Taufa'ofa Tupou IV, is leading by example. Before he turned down in recent years, the monarch was listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's heaviest monarch at more than 200 kilograms (441 pounds). Now he sticks to a strict diet and a regular exercise regime. Tongans, like other Polynesians, are traditionally "big, heavy-bodied people," said government nutritionist Vito Halavatan Tuesday. Traditionally, "if you were thin, people thought you were unhealthy," said Ms. Halavatan.

Unable to curb cigarette smuggling, Singapore now targets smokers

SINGAPORE (AP) — Smokers in Singapore who buy smuggled cigarettes may find their money going up in smoke. After failing to curb "rampant" cigarette smuggling, the government announced Monday it will target the other end of the racket — people caught buying contraband cigarettes. The government will be fined up to \$5,000 Singapore dollars (\$3,424), the customs department announced. And that is only for first time offenders. Subsequent convictions could lead to jail for up to two years.

Modern-day Bonnie and Clyde get long sentences

SEATTLE (R) — A couple accused of an eight-year crime spree which made them the most prolific bank robbers in U.S. history have been hit with stiff sentences by a federal judge, officials said Monday. U.S. District Judge Thomas Zilly sentenced Johnny Williams Jr., accused of masterminding 56 bank robberies in three states, to 92 years in prison. Mr. Zilly sentenced Williams' wife, Carolyn, to 20 years in prison for her role as getaway driver in the crimes, which netted nearly \$900,000. Johnny Williams, 44, nicknamed "The Shooter" for his trademark habit of firing his pistol into the ceiling, pleaded guilty to five counts of bank robbery and conspiracy to rob the 56 banks in Texas, California and Washington State.

Push and shove no longer banned

LONDON (Agencies) — Londoners renowned for calmly and politely queuing up for buses are now legally entitled to push, shove or elbow their way on board as of January 1. But officials for London Transport, doing away with its 57-year-old bylaw requiring people to form orderly queues, said they were not predicting bus-stop anarchy. "I don't think we are going to see a lot of hargling in at bus stops or riotous behaviour. We're still a fairly well-mannered society," a spokeswoman said. "Many people probably did not realise there was a law to

Lesotho's king to regain throne today

MASERU (R) — Lesotho's ousted King Moshoeshoe will be reinstated Wednesday, five years after being deposed by a resive military which put his son on the throne.

The king's return to power and abdication of his son, Letsie III, marks the culmination of months of delicate talks involving neighbouring Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe and brings to a close a constitutional crisis which sparked riots, strikes and threats of military intervention.

While many of Lesotho's 1.6 million people are delighted at the prospect of having the 55-year-old king back on the throne, elements within the ruling party believe the monarchy should have been abolished rather than perpetuated.

The influential youth wing of the ruling Basotho Congress Party (BCP) has called in pamphlets for people to stay away from

work as usual," he told reporters.

British-educated Mr. Letsie, 34, has occupied the throne since King Moshoeshoe was deposed by the former military rulers in 1990 after a 30-year reign.

Political analysts said his reinstatement could help bring political stability to Lesotho as it had been one of the main issues in the struggle for power between royalists and the government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

Mr. Letsie caused a constitutional crisis when he dismissed Mr. Mokhehle's cabinet in August last year, citing popular discontent with the prime minister.

Southern African states, including South Africa which surrounds the kingdom, put strong pressure on the king to return to democratic rule.

As well as royal coup, Lesotho suffered military strife in which fighting be-

Hungarian leaders refuse to meet Romanians

BUDAPEST (R) — Hungary's president and prime minister Tuesday cancelled scheduled meetings with a top Romanian official in protest at recent attacks in Romania against the political party representing ethnic Hungarians.

All six parties represented in the Hungarian parliament also issued a strongly worded statement condemning the criticism of demands for autonomy by the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (HDUR).

"Diverging from the original programme neither Prime Minister (Gyula) Horn nor President (Arpad) Goncz will receive him during this visit," said Erika Torzok, deputy press secretary.

Chechenya rumour mill working overtime

KHASAVYURT (R) — Since Russian troops and tanks first moved into break-away Chechenya six weeks ago, the rumour and propaganda mills on both sides have been working overtime.

Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev told reporters last week there was a "real possibility" the Kremlin would order a nuclear strike on Grozny, since its troops and tanks had failed to take the city.

Russian soldiers, shocked to find themselves fighting tough and well-armed irregulars instead of decadent bandits as they had been led to believe, talk of squads of crack women snipers on the streets of Grozny.

tion from both sides. In Moscow, some media refuse to accept the government line, which is that the Chechens are bandits and gangsters who must be crushed by brave Russian soldiers. The influential Izvestia newspaper has taken a particularly sceptical attitude.

But that is not true across the board. For some media, Soviet-era propaganda reflexes prevail and the Chechens are referred to only as "illegal armed bandits."

Russian human rights commissioner Sergei Kovalyov has branded official coverage of the war as simple lies.

On Jan. 20, the Moscow newspaper Rossiyskiye Vesti, which supports President

that the black and white image was a crude and visible forgery — the flag had been added on to an older picture of the building.

Ironically, the Russians had indeed taken the shattered palace, although Chechen fighters say they abandoned it voluntarily because it no longer offered sufficient cover.

When Western reporters finally arrived on the scene, there was no flag at all.

There are stories from both sides of gruesome atrocities and prisoners massacred, again, no evidence.

The Chechens tell tales of Russians dumping bodies to conceal casualty figures, whatever they may be. Neih-

"kill ratio" in favour of his Chechen fighters.

Western observers believe several thousand people have been killed in total since the war started.

There is also talk of genocide among the Chechens. They say the Russians tried to wipe them out during decades of warfare in the 19th century. Then, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin deported the entire Chechen population to Kazakhstan in 1944.

This time, Chechens say, most of the 400,000 people living in Grozny were taken away in trucks to one of the main Russian bases nearby, Moxdok in neighbouring North Ossetia.

Constitutional amendments underway

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — South Africa's politicians Tuesday began the mammoth task of writing a new constitution within 10 months in a process insiders believe would be marred by bitter disagreements.

The Constitutional Assembly started work in earnest with the aim of producing a new blueprint before a May 1996 deadline set in the 1994 election. The new constitution is scheduled to expire after the scheduled election in 1999. The body consists of the 100-member National Assembly and the 90-seat Provincial Assemblies. President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) enjoys a comfortable majority in both houses.

An indication of the potential for major disagreements over the new basic law came Monday, when the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) — a significant opposition force — signalled its intention to make an issue of international mediation on constitutional issues.

The IFP was enticed into last April's all-race election in the last moment thanks to a deal between the ANC and the former ruling National Party.

Tamil gr rebels of

COLOMBO (AFP) — A Tamil group Tuesday said it had for the safety of its cadres after discovering that Tamil separatist rebels were violating a truce with the government by carrying arms into military-held areas of Sri Lanka's northeast.

In a letter to Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) said Tamil Tiger rebels were "arming with weapons."

The PLOTE said that the "serious violations" by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas "threatened the safety" of its armed cadres in the eastern province.

Under the truce accord signed between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, the rebels

Defence w car; judge

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a move that surprised prosecutors, lawyers for O.J. Simpson contended Monday that a witness saw the ex-football player's Ford Bronco parked at his house about the time his ex-wife and her friend were murdered two miles (three kilometres) away.

The prosecution, upset about the defence offering last-minute witnesses, asked superior court Judge Lance Ito for a one-week delay in the trial's opening statements. There was no immediate ruling from the judge.

In a hearing marked by unusual developments, Mr. Simpson asked the judge for permission to talk to jurors for about a minute before his attorney's opening statement.

Then he wants to show jurors his scars, injuries and physical limitations while lead defence attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. delivers his remarks.

"Mr. Simpson will not say or do anything objectionable or otherwise procedurally inappropriate," said the request, signed by Mr. Cochran.

Mr. Ito didn't immediately rule on the request. In the final countdown of court action before opening statements were to begin in one of the most sensational murder trials in U.S. history, Mr. Ito ruled that jurors will get to see bloody crime scene photographs during opening statements despite defence objections.

Mr. Ito turned aside a defence request to make the trial more "educational."

Jordan Times

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Space for tolerance

THE RECENT incarceration of Adel Hussein, the secretary general of the Egyptian Labour Union, by Egyptian authorities has clearly galvanised opposition from not only the Egyptian Press Association but also from the bar association and other professional groups in the country. At stake for all those who made their opposition to the imprisonment of Mr. Hussein loud and clear was the liberty and freedom of thought and expression.

Before he was released, some political activists went as far as going on a hunger strike to drive home their concern about the fate of human rights in Egypt.

Without going into the merits or demerits of the case presented against Mr. Hussein, one has to note that there is still an apparent low threshold of tolerance for opposing views not only in Egypt but elsewhere in the Arab World. On some occasions, even the most benign rejection of state policy incurs the wrath of Arab governments. This leads us to conclude that the culture of human rights has yet to spring deep and lasting roots in our societies. To be sure the lack of a culture for freedom of thought can be attributed not only to governments but also to opposition groups and other elements in society. Yet we know only too well that there has not been a single people which was able to enter the stage of reformation and enlightenment without the benefit of free flow of ideas including those that may appear to so many of us as unpopular or unacceptable. Obviously there is no quick fix to cultivating a culture for genuine human rights. It has taken generations for other societies to develop such a culture, and it looks like it is also going to take us some time, here in the Arab World, to reach libertarian ideals and goals.

The burden of promoting and protecting tolerance and democracy must rest not only on the shoulders of political liberals: All democrats, whether conservative in orientation or leftist or otherwise, must join forces to uphold the culture of democracy, pluralism and human rights. Where the work should or could be done is not a subject of argument or controversy. Political parties' headquarters, institutions of higher learning and the media are the natural places to begin and augment the effort. Progressively, new institutions have to be established and supported. But we have to start now.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

TAREQ MASARWEH a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, Tuesday said that Sunday's suicide bombings in Israel are one form of resistance to Israeli occupation similar to acts carried out by the Lebanese resistance in southern Lebanon. Saying that the Rabin government seems unable to stop suicide attacks carried out by Palestinians, the writer said that acts of violence will not end by holding the Palestine National Authority (PNA) responsible for attacks on Israeli targets. The Israeli government, said the writer, realises that it was due to a series of suicide attacks in Lebanon that the Americans and the Israelis were forced to abandon their occupation of Beirut. The Palestinian resistance, which is now transforming the stone-throwing intifada into bombing attacks, could at the end force the Israelis out of the occupied Arab lands, said the writer. He said the Israelis should realise that the Palestinians, who were evicted from their homes since 1948 under the force of acts of Jewish terrorism, are now paying back in the same coin. The Israelis are now facing the consequences of their own acts against the Palestinians, who have been oppressed, killed, imprisoned or evicted from their towns and villages for decades, he added.

A WRITER in Al Dustour urged the Social Security Corporation (SSC) to take measures to design a health insurance plan for hundreds of thousands of people living around the poverty line. Ahmad Shaker said that the SSC holdings are in the hundreds of millions of dinars and the corporation is in a position to initiate this system and provide health insurance to Jordanians for certain monthly payments. Such a plan would not only be in implementation of the present government's drive to improve the living conditions of poor and needy people, but would also ensure more stable and secure lives for the majority of the Jordanians, said the writer. Many retired people have no medical insurance, said the writer. The SSC, which has been hesitant to take steps towards introducing a comprehensive health insurance plan, said the writer, should realise that there are numerous benefits in the implementation of such a scheme.

Washington Watch

30 years later, Martin Luther King's dream still denied

By Dr. James Zogby

'What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up?... Or does it explode?'

IT WAS just three decades ago that the American civil rights movement, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, succeeded in pressing the U.S. Congress to pass into law the Civil Rights Act of 1965. It was an amazing period of transformation and hope in American society.

Thirty years later, an entire generation of Americans have no recollection of the era of legal segregation and discrimination under which African-Americans were denied the right to vote, use public facilities, eat at the same restaurants as whites, live in "white" neighbourhoods or go to "white" schools. Even fewer Americans know that the despised system of apartheid that governed the lives of South African blacks was based on the racist system that had been imposed on African-Americans in the south of the U.S. and which lasted for almost 100 years.

The civil rights movement, led by Dr. King, exposed the evils of segregation in the south and challenged whites in the north to face up to their own less formal system of social discrimination that denied African-Americans rights in almost every sector of U.S. political and social life.

The decade of the 1960s was a time of great hope and change. Two democratic presidents, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson moved, at first with hesitation but ultimately with great vigour, to make real the promise of equality and justice for African-Americans.

Schools were ordered to be desegregated and racially integrated. And where racist state governors and mayors resisted, federal soldiers were used to escort African-American children to school. Restaurants and other public places were ordered desegregated and racist housing laws were abolished. And in 1965, when the voting rights of African-Americans were guaranteed, race could no longer be used as a basis for denying the right to vote or to impose barriers which made voting more difficult.

The non-violent mass movement of hundreds of thousands, led by Dr. King, energised and gave hope to African-Americans, challenged the conscience of the nation's leaders and reshaped the U.S. legal landscape.

While all of this must be recognised as positive and significant steps forward, it must also be understood that 30 years later, African-Americans remain disproportionately poor, crowded into increasingly dilapidated inner city ghetto housing, and victims of racial bias in the economic, social and political spheres.

It was 32 years ago that Dr. King spoke of his dream from the steps of Lincoln Memorial in the U.S. capital, where he said:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.'... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

Today, King's dream is still not a reality for the majority of African-Americans in the U.S. And, moreover, there have been some reverses of the progress that was made in the 1960s.

Government-led programmes to produce integration have made white bitterness as a by-product. "Affirmative action" programmes, which were designed to give American-Americans compensatory opportunities to make up for the opportunities denied to them during the three centuries of slavery and institutional racism, have also produced a feeling among some whites that they are being denied opportunities, that such programmes have gone too far and must be stopped or reversed. And while this sentiment is particularly prevalent in the south, it is a national phenomenon.

From the height of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the support it received from Democratic presidents and the Democratic Congress, there has been an erosion of southern white support for the Democratic Party. Republicans have actively courted these alienated white voters (a disproportionate number of whom are men). As the November elections demonstrated, the shift of southern white voter allegiance to the Republican Party produced the Republican takeover of Congress. This shift will result in a negative impact on federal social programmes primarily targeted to assist African-Americans.

Republican victories based in part on calling for an end to these social programmes designed in the 1960s have caused even some Democrats to abandon this agenda. African-Americans are watching these changes, which are causing them to feel even more isolated as they watch support for their concerns fade in Washington, even in people who were once considered allies.

Earlier in this century, Langston Hughes, an African-American poet, wrote: "What happens to a dream deferred Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore — ... Maybe it just sags Like a heavy load. Or does it explode?"

The effects of these denied dreams on African-Americans, of their growing sense of frustration and loss, and of what has now become endemic poverty and deprivation, have been devastating. As Reverend Jesse Jackson, an early follower of Dr. King, and one of the leading voices in the African-American community today, has noted that the prolonged pain of African-Americans has become internalised and has produced self-destructive behaviour, especially among the young. In a speech on the crisis facing African-American youths, delivered a year ago, Reverend Jackson observed:

"... The combination of social and economic neglect on the one hand and aggressive negative rhetoric and actions on the other — by both political parties, the private sector, our education and health care systems, along with inadequate housing and environmental racism — over a protracted period of time, has resulted in turning serious problems into institutionalised conditions with violent consequences. It has produced an underclass of people with aggressive negative self-esteem... They value neither their own life nor the life of another."

The statistics are overwhelming and disheartening. African-American unemployment remains more than twice that of whites (13.8 per cent to 6.2 per cent). Among young African-American men, aged 18-35, the unemployment rate is 31 per cent. The percentage of African-American families living below the official poverty line is a staggering 33 per cent, while only 11 per cent of white families are poor. This deep disparity exists even among those who work. The average white family income is \$40,000, while the average income for an African-American family is only \$22,000.

And these statistics are just the tip of an imposingly negative iceberg. The desperation of African-Americans can be found in any social or economic statistic one might choose. African-American life expectancy, for example, is seven years less than that of whites, and African-Americans' infant mortality rates are three times higher than that of whites.

Long-term poverty and lack of employment opportunity suggested in these statistics of have produced a climate of despair and anger — and crime — in U.S. inner cities. The number of African-American males in prison is higher than the number enrolled in higher education. In all, 26 per cent of African-American men between the ages of 16 and 35 are either in jail, on probation, or on parole. The wonder of these statistics is that, for the most part, this issue have virtually dropped off the national agenda. There is a shocking lack of attention being paid to the effects of the deferred dream by the leadership of both political parties.

As I have noted before, it is possible to live in Washington, D.C. (or just about any other major U.S. city, for that matter) and know little of the plight of the majority of the African-American community — which comprises two-thirds of the city's population. Because of racial segregation and the effects of the long-term poverty, the African-American ghetto is physically separate from "white" neighbourhoods, the downtown shopping area and the business centre where most whites work.

The problems of the ghetto (crime, the brutality of daily life, poverty and unemployment) are read about, but they are not experienced or even seen first-hand by most Americans.

Whites are concerned about crime, afraid of drugs and violence — but these are not "their" problems — the solution proposed by conservatives is more prison and stiffer penalties, including more death sentences. Little attention is given to how to address and solve the systemic nature of these problems.

A further result of this situation is a growing restiveness and anger in the African-American community, where radical and militant leadership (like that of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan) is competing with those, like Jesse Jackson, who have come to be viewed by some angry African-American youths as discredited and "co-opted by the white establishment."

One generation after Dr. King, the dream is still a dream — and, for too many, reality is a nightmare. A new generation of African-American leadership continues to present to the U.S. national conscience the challenge of the slain civil rights leader.

It is a two-pronged challenge. To its own African-American constituency, the new leadership presents the challenge, in the words of Jesse Jackson, "to rise up and stop the killing, rebuild the community, protect and save the children from violence and despair." It is a moral challenge of self-help. As Dr. King himself had noted, it is the oppressed themselves who must first decide if real change is to come, and change themselves.

But to the U.S. government the civil rights leadership of the 1990s present a different challenge: to create employment opportunities in the inner cities, to rebuild the infrastructure of the cities, to provide adequate health care and education — in other words, to restore hope to the dream.

Three decades after the high point of the civil rights movement, the dream of Dr. King has not been realised. But it is clear that as America celebrated Dr. King's birthday last week, that millions of Americans of both races remain committed to the dream and the vision of the dreamer.

M. KAHIL



Murky political landscape for post-Yeltsin Russia

By Larry Ryckman
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia's bloody war in Chechnya and the chaos in the Kremlin are forcing Western leaders to look beyond Boris Yeltsin.

They might not like what they see. The view of Moscow's political landscape is murky at best, with no clear successors to the Russian president emerging from the shadows.

Volatile Russian politics can turn on a dime, but at the moment it seems no one could be elected, including and especially, Mr. Yeltsin. His five-year term expires in June 1996, and it is not clear whether he'll even seek reelection.

Russians have long been cynical about their leaders, but the anger and disgust now directed at all political factions is startling. Not a single major figure, from nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy to reformer Yegor Gaidar, has escaped the tarnish of public life.

For some, that raises the troubling prospect of ambitious generals or Kremlin cabals conspiring to ensure that the next presidential election is never held.

The man many in the West would like to see in charge, former prime

minister Gaidar, is too closely associated with the increasingly unpopular president and his even more unpopular economic reforms.

Mr. Gaidar has broken with Mr. Yeltsin over Chechnya, but his appeals for mass anti-war demonstrations have generated about as much enthusiasm as his cold, professorial campaign speeches.

Mr. Zhirinovskiy, who declared his presidential candidacy yet again this week, reformers in parliamentary elections.

His many campaign promises have gone unkept and his outrageous pronouncements elicit more shrugs than shock. Today, he is the only top politician more distrusted than Mr. Yeltsin in public opinion surveys.

"In any election, (Zhirinovskiy) can't receive more than 10 per cent," said Yuri Levada, the director of the Russian Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research. "He is a really unpopular person."

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, second in power only to Mr. Yeltsin, would have to be considered the favourite in a presidential race. U.S. Vice President Al Gore has maintained close contacts

with Mr. Chernomyrdin, a former director of the Soviet Union's giant natural gas industry.

Mr. Chernomyrdin presents a solid, image, but he seems uncomfortable with the speech-making and glad-handing of modern politics. Still, some believe this lack of spark could be appealing to a public tired of turmoil.

One newspaper said Mr. Chernomyrdin had boosted his chances by stepping forward in the past week as a peacekeeper in the Chechen crisis.

"If the day before yesterday the world was still trying to guess whether there was an alternative to Boris Yeltsin, today some will probably see the answer in the face of the prime minister," the daily Kommersant said Tuesday.

Like Gaidar, however, Mr. Chernomyrdin is a close ally of Mr. Yeltsin, a factor that could hurt him in a national election.

Another close Yeltsin associate, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, is often mentioned as a possible candidate for president in 1996, but his support outside the capital remains in question.

Contenders less palatable in Western circles are

Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov and former vice president Alexander Rutskoi. Although communists have returned to power in some former Soviet satellites, there appears to be little appetite in Russia for either man.

With all of the disdain for professional politicians, it is perhaps not surprising that an outside was the one national figure to see his standing rise in the past year.

Gen. Alexander Lebed, Russia's most outspoken soldier, openly admires Chile's former dictator, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, but says he has no plans to seek the presidency himself.

His public criticism of Mr. Yeltsin as a "minus" would have gotten him fired in any other country, but Gen. Lebed is apparently too popular to touch. For now, the commander of Russia's 14th Army would apparently settle for the job of defence minister, when and if it becomes available.

"My bet is, if we have new elections, most likely our new president will come from outside the Moscow establishment," said Andrei Kortunov, an analyst with the Institute of the USA and Canada.

Israeli economy spells trouble for Rabin

By Tova Cohen
Reuters

TEL AVIV — To judge by economic growth of seven per cent in 1994 and unemployment down by a quarter, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin might have expected Israel's economy to give him little trouble in the opinion polls.

But a plummeting stock market, rising inflation and high interest rates have created a grim economic climate. Analysts now say his government has to come up with solutions fast or face the consequences in next year's general elections.

"Rabin finally understands that the issue of the economy can topple him," said Mordechai Trotoush, acting president of the Israel Federation of Chambers of Commerce.

Even officials privately admit the economy, not peace, will decide the future of the government. And Israel's economy, as ever, has proved perplexing even for the experts, giving out strong positive and negative signals at the same time.

"Israel's economy is basically healthy — but with problems," said Jonathan Katz, senior economist at capital holdings consultants.

While the economy grew at one of the fastest rates in the Western world, inflation rose 14.3 per cent, the highest since 1991, and the balance of payments deficit more than doubled to \$3.0 billion.

To reign in inflation, the central bank raised interest rates seven times during the course of the year. Each time, the Israeli media unleashed a barrage of debate and complaints from the public and industrialists.

The result was a wacky stock market whose major index plunged 37 per cent. Privatisation virtually came to a halt as the government managed to raise only \$204

million from company self-offs, well down from \$1.2 billion in 1993.

"The government does not seem prepared to do anything," Mr. Trotoush said.

Israelis' dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the economy has led to infighting among cabinet members.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal stoked the embers before a cabinet meeting on Sunday, sending Mr. Rabin a scathing criticism of Finance Minister Avraham Shohat's economic policy.

Local media quoted Mr. Shahal's report as saying the government was "hurting hell speed toward an economic disaster."

But all ministers could agree on, after a marathon meeting, was to lower the volume on their debate over who was to blame.

Analysts see little prospects for improvement in 1995. "I don't see the problem of the balance of payments being solved in 1995," said Hezy Gutman, head of economics at the powerful Manufacturers' Association.

The civilian trade deficit ballooned to \$8.3 billion in 1994 from \$6 billion in 1993 and Mr. Gutman does not expect this figure to narrow in 1995.

Exporters say another problem is the shekel, which has been propped up by high domestic interest rates. The Bank of Israel has resisted all calls for a devaluation.

"They (the bank) say a devaluation will cause instability but an appreciation is just as unstable," Mr. Gutman said.

He drew comparisons with Mexico, whose economy plunged into a crisis last month when the government allowed the peso to float freely. The result was a 35 per cent devaluation.

FOLLOWING is the text of the Jordanian-Palestinian Preamble which ended its

Preamble

Stemming from the historic and deep-rooted ties between the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples, and with the aim of the attainment of common interests and goals, and realizing the desire of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestine to achieve the highest level of cooperation and integration in all fields, based on the close ties that prove a solid ground for elevating bilateral relations to advanced levels and integration in the interests of both peoples within the context of a common future, and to enhance and support all good efforts exerted by our brothers in the Arab countries to attain the aspired goals and boost the standing of our Arab Nation and enable it to confront the challenges, and as an expression of our common aspirations and noble goals that are sought by both parties, the two sides have agreed that it is crucial to formulate a unified strategy based on the following principles:

1. The necessity of comprehensive and constant coordination between the two sides to attain the common goals in the interest of both peoples.

2. The two sides affirm that Jordanian-Palestinian relations are special and unique and constitute a model to enhance the potentials and capabilities of the Arab Nation and to extend bridges of trust, understanding and cooperation among the (Arab) people, enabling the Arab Nation to assume its responsibilities and its deserved place in the international community, especially in the light of international developments.

3. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan reiterated its constant and continuous support for the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), to attain their right to self-determination on their national soil and to establish an independent Palestinian state, and to support the Palestinian quest to implement the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles (DoP) as a step towards the realisation of the Palestinian people's national rights.

4. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will cooperate with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in all fields, and will provide all the needed expertise to build national institutions capable of assuming their responsibilities and tasks in the interests of the Palestinian people.

5. The two sides reiterated their commitment to the concept of a comprehensive solution on the basis of international legitimacy and United Nations Security Council resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the restoration of all legitimate rights.

6. The two sides pledge to work jointly towards inter-Arab reconciliation and the achievement of Arab solidarity in the interest of the Arab Nation in order to boost opportunities for just peace that will guarantee security and development for the good of the Arab people, to consolidate (the Arab Nation's) collective belonging and to safeguard human rights and dignity.

(Continued from page 1)
Jordan-Israel peace treaty, he said.

In the Israel-PLO context, the EU fully supported the Palestinian rejection of settlements in the occupied territories and a determination to end the Palestinian right to the rights of even the occupied territories, including Israel, and in peace within secure borders.

He deem the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as illegal," he said. "We are clearly known to the Israelis of c

Text of draft accord between Jordan, PNA

FOLLOWING is the text of the draft agreement concluded by the Jordanian-Palestinian Economic and Financial Committee which ended its meetings in Amman Monday:

Preamble

Stemming from the historic and deep-rooted ties between the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples, and with the aim of the attainment of common interests and goals, and reiterating the desire of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Palestine to achieve the highest level of cooperation and integration in all fields, based on the close ties that prove a solid ground for elevating bilateral relations to advanced levels and integration to the interests of both peoples within the context of a common future, and to enhance and support all good efforts exerted with our brothers in the Arab countries to attain the aspired goals and boost the standing of our Arab Nation and enable it to confront the challenges, and as an expression of our common aspirations and noble goals that are sought by both parties, the two sides have agreed that it is crucial to formulate a unified strategy based on the following principles:

1. The necessity of comprehensive and constant coordination between the two sides to attain the common goals in the interest of both peoples.

2. The two sides affirm that Jordanian-Palestinian relations are special and unique and constitute a model to enhance the potentials and capabilities of the Arab Nation and to extend bridges of trust, understanding and cooperation among the (Arab) people, enabling the Arab Nation to assume its responsibilities and its deserved place (in the international community), especially in the light of international developments.

3. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan reiterates its constant and continuous support for the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), to attain their right to self-determination on their national soil and to establish an independent Palestinian state, and to support the Palestinian quest to implement the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles (DoP) as a step towards the realisation of the Palestinian people's national rights.

4. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will cooperate with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in all fields, and will provide all the needed expertise to build national institutions capable of assuming their responsibilities and tasks in the interests of the Palestinian people.

5. The two sides reiterate their commitment to the concept of a comprehensive solution on the basis of international legitimacy and United Nations Security Council resolutions 242, 338, and 435 and the restoration of all legitimate rights.

6. The two sides pledge to work jointly towards inter-Arab reconciliation and the achievement of Arab solidarity in the interest of the brotherly peoples and all of the Arab Nation in order to boost opportunities for a just peace that will guarantee security and development for the good of the Arab people, to consolidate (the Arab Nation's) collective belonging, and to safeguard human rights and dignity.

7. The two pledge continuous cooperation and coordination in all regional and international forums and organisations to serve the interests of both sides and the higher Arab interests.

8. The agreement that Jordan signed with Israel on Oct. 26, 1994 constitutes an important step towards the restoration of Jordan's sovereign rights on its land, water and borders and towards securing the rights of the (Palestinian) refugees displaced in 1948 and 1967 in accordance with international laws and resolutions. The agreement also enhances the other tracks of negotiations in a way that secures the attainment of Arab legitimate rights.

9. In order to complement all aspects of coordination and consultation and to serve the interests of the two peoples, the two sides believe it is crucial to re-activate the Jordanian-Palestinian higher committee to follow up mutual issues of concern, and provide an appropriate mechanism that would ensure the realisation of the two peoples' interests through constant and direct contacts.

First: Monetary Affairs

1. The two sides agree that the Jordanian dinar will remain the currency in use in addition to the other currencies in circulation in the self-rule areas.

Being so, it will be a legal means for payment for all purposes and official dealings and will be accepted by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and its various institutions as well as banks.

2. The two sides agree to committing themselves to entering into comprehensive and early negotiations aimed at organising the process of exchanging Jordanian dinars in the self-rule areas for local Palestinian currency. They also commit themselves to taking arrangements and other obligations required in this respect should the PNA decide to have separate Palestinian currency.

The two sides also pledge to refrain from taking any abrupt unilateral measures concerning monetary affairs under any circumstances that could adversely affect the monetary stability in any of the two countries or negatively affect their mutual economic dealings.

3. The Palestinian side undertakes to make all local payments in the Jordanian dinar until the new Palestinian currency has been issued.

Second: Banking

1. The licensing of banks in PNA areas

1.1 The PNA will issue licences to commercial banks operating in the self-rule areas. This covers Jordanian banks opening branches in Palestinian territories.

1.2. The Jordanian and the Palestinian sides will offer the required facilities (under the existing legislations in Jordan and Palestine) for businesses to open branches or offices for the Jordanian or the Palestinian banks in either country if these banks have their head offices in Jordan or in the Palestinian lands.

1.3. Licences issued by the Central Bank of Jordan to Jordanian banks operating in the West Bank which will later fall under the jurisdiction of the PNA will remain valid provided that these banks be subject to any new legislations issued by the PNA in the future.

The two sides agreed to coordinate their work concerning the licensing of new branches for Jordanian banks which have not been licensed before the signing of this agreement until the PNA takes charge of all authorities in the occupied West Bank.

2. Control and supervision of banking operations

2.1. The two sides agreed to set up a joint committee from the Central Bank of Jordan and the Palestine Monetary Authority to undertake the task of laying the foundations and the mechanism to conduct control and supervision on branches and offices of Jordanian banks operating in the Palestinian territories in a manner that would ensure sound liquidity for these banks. This procedure will continue until the Palestine Monetary Authority has finalised its own control and supervision system.

2.2. The Basel Agreement will serve as reference in matters related to the process of coordinating control over banks and the distribution of authorities between the two sides. The Palestine Monetary Authority and the Central Bank of Jordan will exchange information and data on Jordanian banks and bank offices operating in the Palestinian lands via the joint committee mentioned under item 2.1. They will also exchange statistics related to Jordanian dinars deposited in non-Jordanian banks operating in the Palestinian territories.

The Central Bank of Jordan will present the PNA through the joint committee any information on statistics connected with the activities of Palestinian banks that are operating or would be operating in Jordan and those of Jordanian banks operating on the West Bank.

2.4 The Central Bank of Jordan will offer expertise and services to the Palestinian side to help it create a Palestine Monetary Authority and recruit cadres for banking operations within a programme conducted by the Central Bank of Jordan and the training facilities of banks in Jordan.

2.5. The Jordanian side will make available sufficient reserve liquidity in Jordanian dinars for Jordanian banks operating in the self-rule areas in accordance with rules to be set by the joint committee.

The two sides will conduct immediate consultations in case of emergency in line with policy to be worked out by the joint committee.

6.2 The two sides will conduct immediate consultations to deal with any emergency in monetary questions related to the circulation of Jordanian dinars in the self-rule regions.

This agreement will be revised at the request of any of the two parties and whenever the need arises.

Jordan unlikely to get major EU debt write-off — diplomats

**By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter**

AMMAN — Chances of Jordan realising its quest for a substantial write-off of its debts owed to the Paris Club of creditor governments are slim, given the economic preoccupation of some of the European countries and the non-urgent nature of the Jordanian request, two European diplomats said Tuesday.

The diplomats also said Jordan's means to attain self-sufficiency and economic advancement were mainly through making itself attractive to foreign investment and this is a task that the Kingdom had to undertake on its own.

The assertions were made by French Ambassador Bernard Bajelet and German Charge d'Affaires Michael Bock at a press conference held to mark the French assumption of office as the rotating president of the European Union (EU) with effect from Jan. 1.

They were answering a question how far the EU had gone in fulfilling its promise of "investment for peace" seen as inevitable if Arab-Israeli peace accords were to be sustained and consolidated.

About \$3.5 billion of Jordan's foreign debts are owed to the Paris Club. More than two-thirds of it have been

rescheduled since 1989. Under an agreement reached last year, Jordan will be paying token amounts of interest until 1997, when fresh rescheduling negotiations are expected on the outstanding amount.

Mr. Bajelet said EU members accounted for 60 per cent of the \$1.2 billion of Jordanian debts that were rescheduled under "very generous terms" in June 1994.

"I don't expect (the EU) to go any further than this" in debt relief for Jordan, said the ambassador. He also noted that the total EU assistance to Jordan in 1994, in the form of contribution by individual governments and aid channelled by the EU Executive Commission, was 300 million European currency units (ECUs), or about \$340 million.

The amount of debt write-off offered by EU member states to Jordan in 1994 was 63 million ECUs (about \$71 million) and debt-equity swap around 120 million ECUs (\$140 million), Mr. Bajelet said.

Acknowledging that the U.S., another member of the Paris Club, is offering \$702 million in debt write-off to Jordan, Mr. Bajelet said, however, that "there is nothing that obliges us to imitate the U.S. or anyone else."

"We have economic difficulties and there are definite objective budget limitations to what we could do," he said.

According to the ambassador, the U.S. debt write-off was also contingent on Jordan signing the Oct. 26 peace treaty with Israel.

"Europe does not have a record of making aid to Jordan contingent on political agreements or peace treaties," Mr. Bajelet said. "That is of course not to downplay our total and complete support for the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and appreciation of Jordan's commitment to peace."

Furthermore, Jordan "belongs to a category of countries which receive intermediate revenue and thus excluded from debt forgiveness," Mr. Bajelet said.

However, the unlikelihood of debt write-off of any substantial amount "does not mean that we would not do anything to help Jordan," added the ambassador. He said the EU stood ready to discuss with "the Jordanian authorities specific projects, including those which have a regional nature," and possibly extend financing with soft terms.

Mr. Bock suggested that it might not be a good idea for Jordan to press for debt forgiveness. "We think the call for debt forgiveness has been

exaggerated," said the German charge d'affaires.

Given the expectations of foreign private sector investments in Jordan after the Kingdom signed peace with Israel, "debt write-offs have the negative side that once any country gets debt write-off, the private sector thinks there is something wrong with the country's economy," Mr. Bock asserted.

The German diplomat cited the example of Poland, which received a more than 50 per cent write-off of its foreign debts three years ago, and noted that foreign investors were reluctant to invest in Poland because of the very perceptions created by the debt forgiveness.

"On the other hand, Jordan is very much justified in its expectations, considering that international interest in any particular country remains focused as long as the country remains within the centre of political focus and tends to fade once the political focus shifts."

Both Ambassador Bajelet and Mr. Bock said the main share of the effort to invite foreign capital to Jordan rested with the Kingdom itself. While European countries would extend help wherever possible, "it is up to Jordan itself to create a climate conducive to foreign investment from the private sector," said Mr. Bajelet.

King

(Continued from page 1)

has suffered over long years, until a state of just and comprehensive peace is reached to create new conditions which can be enjoyed by all nations of the region and future generations."

Referring to the hitches on the peacemaking between Israel and Syria, Mr. Qasem said these had not progressed "in the manner that had been hoped."

Similar pledges of support were given by Mr. Rawas, the Omani information minister. Oman hosted Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin briefly Dec. 26, even though the sultanate has no formal relations with the Jewish state.

NPT options

(Continued from page 1)

and the U.S. is pushing to have the treaty renewed indefinitely.

Mr. Abu Odeh said while countries of the North support the U.S. view, the South is considering the options of having the treaty renewed for either a definite period at the end of which it will be reviewed.

He said countries of the South want to have the treaty include provisions which were missed when it was first made. Among these are a prohibition on nuclear tests, commitments against the use of nuclear weapons and permission for the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

News reports quoted an unnamed U.S. official as saying his country is certain it will have the 85 majority vote needed for indefinite extension of the treaty while Third World countries are reportedly worried the U.S. will be able to orchestrate the rules of the voting to achieve its goal.

Article 10 of the treaty stipulates that countries which have signed the treaty are bound by the decision of the majority of the signatories. That would mean Egypt, which has signed the treaty, will be committed to it even if it does not sign it in April.

Israeli press reports said Tuesday that the U.S. has informed Egypt of a possible compromise that would allow it not to sign the treaty but also not to push Arab and Third World countries towards the same course of action.

Passports

(Continued from page 1)

League. The official said that even if Jordan recognised and accepted the Palestinian passport it would "be meaningless" unless it was accepted by Arab interior ministers and the international community.

Palestinian officials have said PNA President Yasser Arafat is expected to raise the issue of dual citizenship with King Hussein during their talks. Palestinians claim that donor countries, including the United States, would accept the Palestinian passport as a "travel document and not as a nationality." But Palestinians argue that a passport still remains a "crucial symbol of nationhood."

The majority of Arab states have held back support for allowing dual Arab citizenship.

According to PNA officials, Mr. Arafat "will try to find a way to allow Palestinians to keep their Jordanian passports and at the same time convince Jordan to recognise the Palestinian passport."

"If Jordan accepts the concept of a Palestinian passport, in addition to the Jordanian one, it will show practical support for the Palestinians," said one Palestinian official.

But a Jordanian official has said that Amman had three prerequisites that must be met before it would discuss the future relationship between Jordan and Palestinians as well as deciding who is a Palestinian and who is a Jordanian.

The source said that a full Israeli withdrawal, Palestinian self-determination and most importantly a solution to the refugee problem would have to be achieved before the issues of future relations and passports could be settled.

More than a million Palestinians in the West Bank hold two-year Jordanian passports granting Jordanian citizenship. The Kingdom has also granted Jordanian passports that act as travel documents to over 100,000 Gazans.

Accords seen to signal well-founded relationship

(Continued from page 1)

ship prior to an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian peoples' attainment of their right to self-determination and particularly a solution to the problem of Palestinian refugees.

The Palestinian-Israeli agreement, signed in 1993, does not define the future of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories as final status negotiations were put off to a later stage.

The Palestinians, however, had been seeking to reach a clearly defined framework with Jordan based on future confederal relations. The Palestinians were hoping that such an agreement will enhance their quest for sovereignty in their negotiations with Israel, and will make the idea of an independent state more acceptable to the U.S. and Israel.

The agreement drafted this week responds partly to Palestinian objectives as it includes an unequivocal Jordanian support for the aspired Palestinian goal for a negotiated settlement with Israel, i.e. an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Both Jordanian and Palestinian officials expressed satisfaction with the terms of the agreement. Palestinian officials hope that the agreement will lessen the dependence of the autonomous areas and the occupied West Bank

on Israel. The need for closer cooperation and even integration with Jordan was reinforced by Israel's constant closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a reprisal for Palestinian attacks.

"With or without the Israeli closures, integration with Jordan is crucial for the Palestinian struggle for independence," Ahmad Qomria, the Palestinian official who reached the agreements with Israel, told the Jordan Times on Tuesday.

Previous efforts to reach a cooperation agreement between Jordan and the Palestinians foundered as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat refrained from signing any agreements at the last minute.

Mr. Arafat was afraid, according to Palestinian officials, that an agreement with Jordan would limit his manoeuvrability with Israel, especially that Israel was refusing to accept Palestinian sovereignty and Jordan was not ready to commit itself to a confederation between two independent states.

The Palestinian leader, it seems, was also more confident of international political and financial support and of Israel's commitment to implement the self-rule agreement.

But as international aid did not flow in as Mr. Arafat had anticipated, and the constant delay in the implementation of the self-rule agreement

coupled with the paramount task of reconstructing a devastated economy and a strong internal opposition, Mr. Arafat returned to Jordan.

Many PNA officials had been pressing Mr. Arafat to reach agreements with Jordan and deepen the relations with the Kingdom and increase his manoeuvrability with Israel.

Chances for a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement narrowed when Israel recognised Jordan's role in the Muslim holy sites in east Jerusalem as part of the Jordanian-Israeli treaty.

Even Palestinian critics of the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, who felt that the step could jeopardise Palestinian claims for sovereignty over East Jerusalem, prodded Mr. Arafat not to escalate tension with Jordan and to seek to talk it over with Amman, especially that Israel was benefiting from the ensuing dispute.

The preamble of the accord indicates that the PNA had realised that it would be extremely difficult to build institutions, especially in a place where expertise is scarce, without Jordan's help.

The agreement involves a commitment by Jordan to help the PNA build various national institutions — a prerequisite for Palestinian nation-building. Jordan on its turn, was always pressing for agree-

ments with the PLO, but seemed less keen if not almost disinterested after signing its own treaty with Israel last October — particularly that it was let down many times by Mr. Arafat.

But things have since then changed. The Jordanian-Israeli treaty proved not to be enough to cause an aspired economic boom, while the Amman Financial Market showed great sensitivity to the deterioration of the Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

News reports on Tuesday indicated that the Amman Financial Market immediately picked up at the news of progress towards reaching an economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestinians.

Jordan, as officials say, felt that its problem with the PLO over Jerusalem was adversely affecting its relations with the other Arab states.

Both sides decided to ease the tension by avoiding to discuss the issue of Jordan's role in the holy sites at a recent meeting for the Jerusalem Committee in the Moroccan city of Ifran (see separate story).

The Jordanian and Palestinian opposition to the peace agreements with Israel had been calling for joint Jordanian-Palestinian action but are expected to oppose the new accords since they are partly based on the same very agreements the opposition rejects.

"Jordanian support for the agreement mentioned in the memorandum is very important for him," said the official.

Palestinians realise that if they do not enter agreements with Jordan, the Kingdom can export goods to those areas in the West Bank that are not yet under PNA rule under a Jordan-Israeli economic protocol.

Jordan is also keen to see the Palestinian-Israeli agreement succeed to ensure the comprehensive nature of the solution and avoid being the only Arab country of the Madrid conference parties negotiating with Israel to have made peace with the Jewish state as Egypt did in 1979.

"Arab-Israeli peace cannot be complete without a settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict," Foreign Minister Kabariti told journalists.

Mr. Arafat's visit is seen as another step in the government's pledge to clear the Arab atmosphere. His visit was preceded by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Aqaba last Saturday and a visit by the King to Oman.

Israel plans 'security border'

(Continued from page 1)

Among those detained was Sheikh Jamal Mansour, a leading Hamas figure in the West Bank town of Nablus, the reports said.

Soldiers also searched and ransacked the Ali Ben Abi Taleh Mosque in the West Bank town of Al Bireh. At the mosque, several copies of the Koran lay scattered on the floor.

France vows to reassert role

(Continued from page 12)

Jordan-Israel peace treaty, he said.

In the Israel-PLO context, the EU fully supported the Palestinian rejection of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and also backed the Palestinian right to self-determination in return for the rights of every country, including Israel, to live in peace within secure borders.

"We deem the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as illegal," he said. "Our stand is clearly known to Israel, and we consistently remind the Israelis of our

positions that are indeed a key point in our relationship."

Mr. Bajelet said "the basic principles" that the EU believes as the pillars of any just peace in the region also include "the restitution of all occupied territories, refusal to accept faits accomplis in Jerusalem and denunciation of terrorism."

"We condemn the recent bomb attack that claimed innocent lives in Israel," he said referring to Sunday's suicide explosions in Netanya. Asked whether such attacks would have any bearing on EU assistance and

support for the Palestinian National Authority in Gaza and Jericho, Mr. Bajelet said: "Our commitment to help the Palestinian territories is firm and solid and extremist attacks do not have any bearing on our commitment."

Mr. Bajelet said the European Union, which has committed 500 million European Currency Units (ECUs), or about \$570 million, at a rate of 100 million ECUs (\$114 million) every year for five years, as aid to the Palestinians, had already allocated 85 million ECUs (\$96 million) to the territories.

Sub-Saharan countries remain world's poorest — World Bank

ABIDJAN (AFP) — Persistent illiteracy, rising infant mortality rates, low life expectancy and almost nonexistent spending power mean countries south of the Sahara remain the world's poorest, a World Bank survey has shown.

The findings, from the bank's 1995 Atlas, also showed that prospects remain gloomy for much of the African continent.

Of 209 countries studied by the bank, 34 have literacy rates higher than 50 per cent, 23 of them south of the Sahara. The worst was Burkina Faso on 82 per cent followed by Sierra Leone (79

per cent), Benin (77 per cent), and Guinea and Somalia (both 76 per cent).

The only non-African countries in the bottom ten were Nepal, on 74 per cent, and Afghanistan on 71.

Twenty-nine countries registered infant mortality rates greater than 10 per 100 births, all but four of them south of the Sahara. Worst was Mozambique with 16.2 per cent, then Sierra Leone (14.3 per cent), Liberia (14.2 per cent) and Guinea-Bissau (14 per cent).

At the opposite end of the scale, rates for Sweden, Singapore, Japan and Ireland

stood at 0.5 per cent.

Also, 22 out of 24 countries with life expectancies of under 50 years are in sub-Saharan Africa, the Atlas showed. Expectancy was 39 in Guinea-Bissau, 43 in Sierra Leone and Uganda 43, and 44 in Guinea.

Economic figures made equally depressing reading for these countries that provided gross national product statistics, showing that people in 28 states, 19 of them African, have to live on an average of less than a dollar a day.

Purchasing power — income potential relative to the

cost of goods and services — also put the sub-Saharan nations at the bottom of the pile. They provided the 13 poorest countries of the world, all with real spending capacity of less than \$850 per resident per year.

Prospects are not good either. The Atlas showed only six countries where investment provided less than 10 per cent of gross domestic product. All were African, namely Burundi (two per cent), Niger (six per cent), and the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Chad all on nine per cent.

Yemen holds crucial reform talks with IMF, World Bank

SANAA (R) — Yemen has asked an International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank team to let it slowly implement painful economic reforms to avoid a social backlash, diplomatic and economic sources said Tuesday.

Yemen's central bank governor and other officials started annual consultations with the IMF-World Bank team Monday.

"The government believes it will be a suicidal step to embark on the immediate implementation of the reform package at once," one diplomat said.

The package includes abolishing subsidies, unifying exchange rates, cutting down overemployment in the government and public sector and introducing economic

prices for water and power supply, economic sources said.

"In principle, the government is in favour of carrying out the reforms, but at stages. A sudden implementation is likely to trigger social violence and riots as backlash," one economic source said.

The government newspaper Al Thawra said Tuesday the talks reviewed financial developments in 1993 and 1994, when Yemen did not issue budgets due to political instability and civil war.

Since the merger of north and south which created Yemen in 1990, the country has maintained that a market economy and privatisation were pillars of its policy, but little has been done, the economic sources said.

They said direct and indirect subsidies cost Yemen, one of the poorest Arab countries, more than \$400 million a year. The Yemeni Chamber of Commerce and Industry estimated inflation at 60 per cent and unemployment at 30 per cent.

Wages have not risen in two years while consumer goods prices rose up to 100 per cent since the civil war ended in July.

The sources said the IMF-World Bank team suggested the Yemeni rial exchange rate at 50-55 riyals to the U.S. dollar. At present it ranges from the official 12 riyals to the dollar to the free market rate of 84 riyals.

The package envisages price rises of three to fourfold for water, power and petrol.

Kuwait planners said to propose company tax

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's planning ministry has proposed a sales tax, a tax on Kuwaiti companies and raising customs fees in one reform package designed to curb a large budget deficit, a newspaper has reported.

Describing the so-called "rapid reform" plan, Al Watan said the tax system would apply to commercial and industrial profits of Kuwaiti firms at rates starting at 10 per cent in 1996, rising to 21 per cent in 2000 and 30 per cent in 2005.

Kuwait currently does not tax companies wholly-owned by Kuwaitis but does tax foreign companies operating here and the profit share of a Kuwaiti company.

The ministry also suggested increasing customs fees from four per cent in 1995 to a ceiling of 10 per cent in the year 2000 and a sales tax on locally-made goods at the same rate as the customs fees.

The report made no mention of income tax, which is not levied in Kuwait.

Finance Minister Nasser Abdullah Al-Rodhan announced plans last week to cut a Gulf war-inflated shortfall by a third to one billion dinars (\$3.34 billion) in fiscal 1995/96.

The net deficit in 1994/95 is projected at 1.502 billion dinars (\$5 billion).

Officials have also said they want to increase charges on currently heavily subsidised public services such as electricity, water and telephones.

Devalued peso provides silver lining for exporters in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The crisis that weakened the peso by more than a third may have scared some investors away from Mexico, but it is a windfall for manufacturers and other exporters.

It is especially good news for exporters, whose costs fell along with the peso, while their sales on the world market — in dollars, which are now worth more pesos — were unaffected.

"Anyone manufacturing in Mexico has been affected positively," said Richard Kiddy, of El Paso, Texas-based Quality Manufacturing Services Inc.

The lower peso may make it easier for companies to follow in the footsteps of shoemaker Nike, which is moving its operations from the Far East to Mexico to take advantage of lower tariffs under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — a goal of

the free trade pact.

"Companies that were thinking of going to lower-wage countries are now saying, 'hey, maybe we can go to Mexico,'" said Martha Tovar, president of Solunet, which provides market research to companies looking at Mexico.

"This might pull companies with marginal operations down to Mexico," Don Nibbe, publisher of the twin plant News Trade Journal.

Kenneth Brown, chairman and chief executive officer of General Electric de Mexico, S.A. de C.V., which makes gas ranges, motors and light fixtures, said the company will have lower labour costs because of the devalued peso.

Mr. Brown says General Electric has been expanding production in Mexico "for some time," but the lower peso will make it cheaper to purchase more local supplies.

"This opens up the possibility of sourcing materials like steel from Mexican producers," he said.

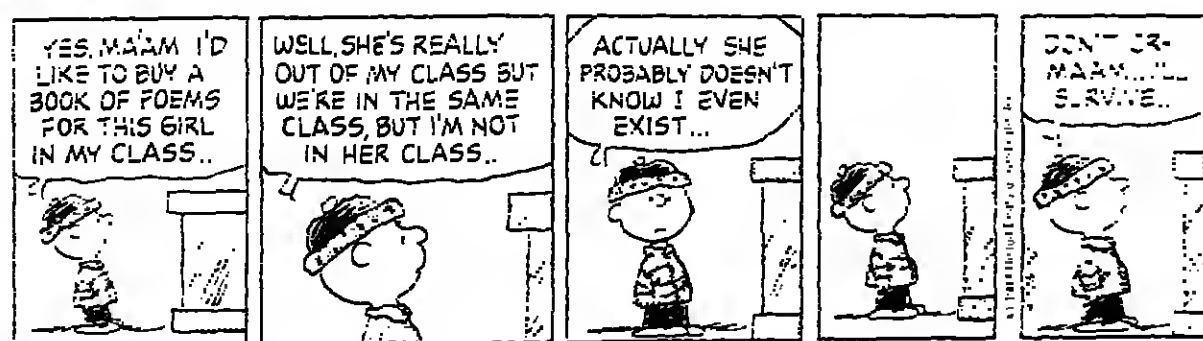
Mexico's evaporating foreign reserves and abrupt abandonment of policies propping up the value of the peso on Dec. 20 set off a flight of stock investments and made Wall Street suddenly leery of Mexican stocks, which had been flying high in recent years.

But investing directly in Mexican industry has become a potentially attractive option.

"Those planning to invest are finding their dollars go 30 per cent further," said Frank Conde with the Dallas, Texas-based Dean International. "This could actually boost U.S. corporate investment in Mexico."

The surprise drop in local costs should also boost Mexican exports.

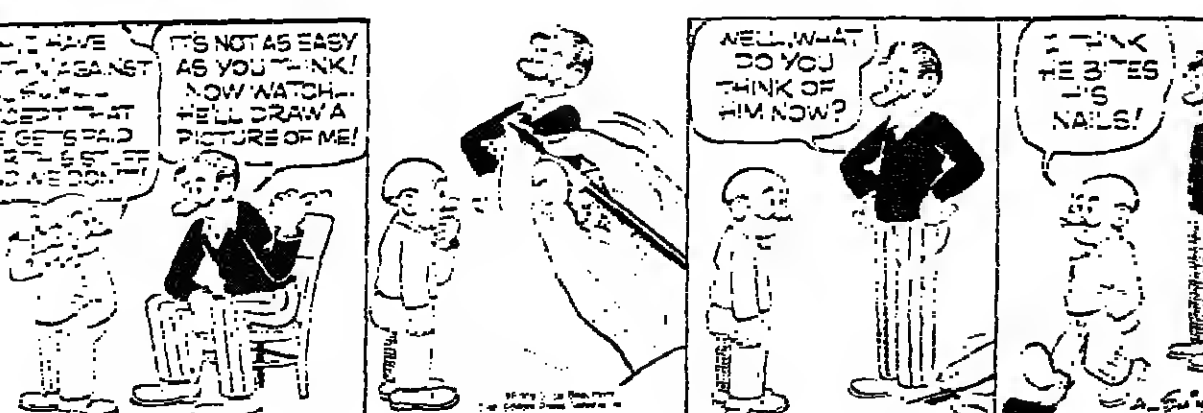
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Riyal sinks, gold soars in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — The Iranian rial has sunk to new lows and the price of gold coins has soared because of public fears about inflation, dealers and newspapers have said.

London-based Iranian money dealer Ali Fakpour said the dollar rose to about 3,450 riyals on the illegal open market in Tehran, up 15 per cent in a month.

The Iranian Azadi coin, containing 0.235 ounce (6.66 grammes) of 22 carat gold soared to 430,000 riyals (\$125), up 30,000 riyals from Sunday, Iran's news agency IRNA said.

Tehran newspapers blamed public fear of inflation for the rush on dollars and gold coins.

"The prices are back in the fast lane again and speeding to break their own records. High prices are the talks of the town," said the English-language Kayhan International.

Recent newspaper reports put annual inflation at 40 to 50 per cent.

The daily Salam said the authorities were involved in a "friendly duel" with increasingly active illegal money changers, despite earlier tough talk and crackdowns.

Authorised dealers continued to sell up to \$1,000 at the controlled rate of 2,700 riyals per dollar to each passenger travelling abroad, newspapers said.

"That was a genuine disas-

Yugoslav economic reforms tame inflation, face new hurdles

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslavia's economic recovery programme, which succeeded in taming one of the world's worst bouts of hyperinflation, marked its first anniversary Tuesday and experts say it has reached a crossroads.

Impending reforms of tax, wage and investment laws designed to move rump Yugoslavia's central market economy towards a capitalist system must succeed if a shift back to the bad old ways is to be avoided, economists believe.

Study groups set up to make recommendations on how best to transform the economy are due to report this month, but political analysts say the reforms face powerful vested interest with no appetite for change.

The government has learned to live with United Nations economic sanctions, imposed on Belgrade for its part in the war in Bosnia, but they still pose a major obstruction to recovery.

"The recovery programme has worked so far despite overwhelming odds but now it has reached its second stage, which could prove to be even more difficult than the first," a Belgrade-based economic expert told Reuters.

On Jan. 24, 1994, when former World Bank expert Dragoslav Avramovic, the new central bank governor, launched his programme, monthly inflation was 313 million per cent.

"That was a genuine disas-

ter. Monthly wages, totalling millions of dinars, were actually worth five German marks (\$3), monthly pensions less than one mark (70 cents). The situation was desperate," Milovan Zivkovic, head of the Federal Bureau of Statistics, said Monday.

Shops were empty, banks short of cash and public transport had all but collapsed. Despair drove pensioners to suicide.

Mr. Avramovic pegged the dinar to the German mark, reined in the printing of money and halted inflation. Critics gave him three months, but ordinary people hailed him as a saviour.

By controlling the printing of money, and by mounting a sustained public relations campaign, the avuncular Avramovic has kept the lid on inflation, if not eliminated it completely.

Authorities claim the annual inflation rate last year was zero. "Our annual inflation rate in 1994 was 0.0 per cent," Mr. Zivkovic said.

"Living costs rose by 3.3 per cent, commodity prices rose by 7.3 per cent but services dropped by 19 per cent."

Despite the official figures, the German mark Tuesday was selling on the street for 1.8 dinars. The government has tacitly admitted problems with inflation by announcing a plan to cut many prices to the levels prevailing last summer.

Now, Mr. Avramovic must carry out what amounts to an

overhaul of the whole economic system, diplomats say. Instead of a system where social stability is achieved by paying vast numbers of workers to do nothing, major firms face the prospect of radical restructuring.

Many managers of the formerly communist enterprises are unhappy with austerity programmes that will cut their workforces and reduce their influence.

"This will prove to be more difficult because many of the very people on whom this part of the programme hinges for implementation are passionately opposed to it," the Belgrade economic expert said.

"This will put Avramovic at odds with many old-timers among Yugoslav managers who still believe that the state should keep pumping money into the their dinosaur-like enterprises simply to maintain social security," the expert said.

In his push towards a market economy, Mr. Avramovic's best ally may however be Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who rose to power through the communist hierarchy.

Mr. Milosevic weathered a series of political storms last year, including cutting off the Bosnian Serbs for failing to accept an international peace plan for Bosnia, largely because of the economic stability provided by Mr. Avramovic.

Poland poised for quicker growth, but facing difficult challenges — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — Poland, the first eastern European post communist country to return to growth, should experience accelerating economic expansion over the next two years, but will face increasingly difficult policy challenges, the OECD has said.

In a survey of the Polish economy, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) paid tribute to successive governments for showing "perseverance" in pursuing economic stabilisation and rapid reforms, noting that this had now brought "impressive" rewards.

But it also stressed that Poland must come to grips with several "problem areas," including high inflation, delays in restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to make them more competitive in a market context pending privatisation, and continuing difficulties in the banking and financial market sector.

The OECD stressed that under its new medium-term strategy for the next stage of transition, Poland must strive for continued progress in stabilisation, through "credible"

policies to cut its budget deficit and the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR).

This must be backed by continuing structural reforms, notably to make the large SOE's profit-oriented, and to raise the return on investment.

One key challenge, the report said, would be to maintain high profits and saving rates, while the population "understandably" demands increased consumption.

The report emphasised that even after debt reduction and rescheduling agreements with both official and commercial creditors, Poland remains "heavily indebted" and needs to maintain rapid export growth and restrain "domestic absorption."

Likely growing demand for investment funds, and pressures for higher consumption, pointed to high real interest rates over the medium term, and a need for increased household saving and high corporate profits to ensure a high level of self-finance.

Presenting the report, OECD assistant secretary general Salvatore Zecchini said it reflected the OECD's

recognition that "Poland has made a great deal of progress in transforming the economy and in developing a vibrant private enterprise sector."

Polish deputy premier and finance minister Grzegorz Kolodko said the private sector now generates 60 per cent of Poland's GDP, and provides jobs for 55 to 57 per cent of the labour force.

He said Poland achieved export-led GDP growth in 1994 at a rate of 5.0 per cent.

Mr. Zecchini, putting last year's expansion at "between 4.0 and 5.0 per cent," confirmed that Poland experienced "high" growth last year compared with the rest of Europe.

After contracting sharply in 1990-91, Poland's GDP grew by a total 6.5 per cent in 1992 and 1993, and OECD economists now project a continued pick-up at rates of about 5.0 per cent for this year and 1996.

Stressing that this would require further raising investment from recent modest levels, the report said growth at such a pace should make for a steady fall in recorded unemployment, from 16.5 per cent of the labour force at

end-1994 to about 15 per cent by end-1996.

Consumer price inflation, which nearly reached hyperinflation levels in 1990 when Poland's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) was launched, should be down from 35 per cent in 1993 to an average of 27 to 30 per cent for 1994, the report said.

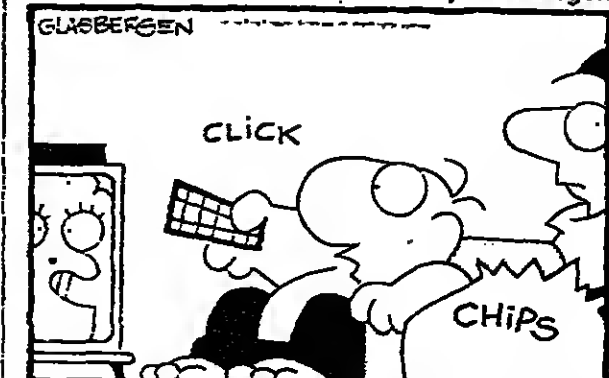
It foresaw a further deceleration to a rate of 18 per cent by the end of 1996.

Mr. Kolodko shared the OECD's concern about inflation, but said the government was still aiming for a reduction to 17 per cent by the end of this year and "a single-digit rate" by 1997.

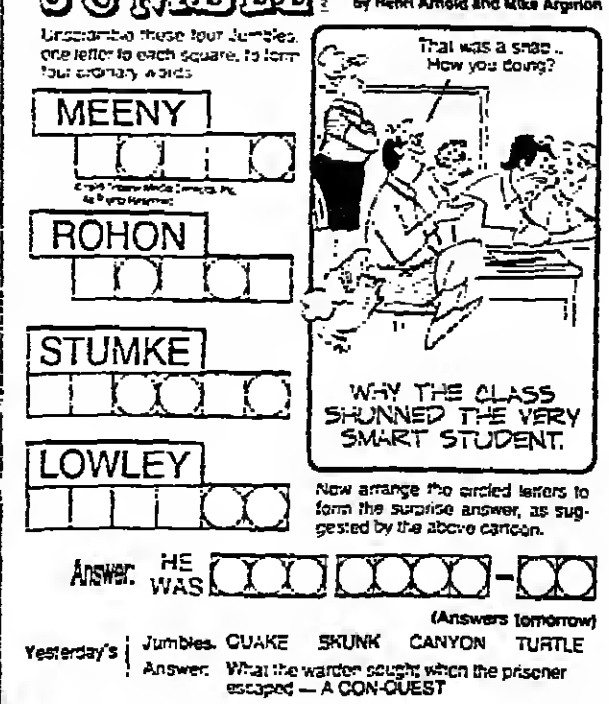
He also said the fiscal budget deficit should not exceed 3.0 per cent of GDP this year, which the OECD saw as "high in comparison with what the economy is able to finance."

The report nevertheless said "the way... seems open for Poland to start down the path of convergence with the OECD area," and Mr. Kolodko said he expected his country to be a fully fledged member of the OECD by mid-1996.

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Jordan Times tel 667171

Banker sees no quick recovery at AFM

The Arab Banking Corporation (Jordan) General Manager Jawad Haddad does not expect a quick recovery in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) as many of the reasons behind the slowdown are still there. According to Mr. Haddad, lifting of the sanctions on Iraq and the resumption of exports to the Kingdom's eastern neighbour could revive the stock exchange. However, he noted the rise in interest rates and the banks' switching more to lending than investing in shares and stocks were key factors weighing negatively on the activity at the stock exchange (Al Dustour).

According to Central Bank Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi, Jordan's exports increased by about 10 per cent in 1994 and, as such, there should be no complaints of the dinar exchange rate being a hindrance to exports (Al Dustour).

Palestinians have asked Jordan to help market Gazan citrus as prices there have fallen to JD 40 per tonne or 40 fils a kilogramme (Al Dustour).

Under an agreement signed between Palestinian and Jordanian officials, Royal Jordanian will carry the mail from Gaza and the West Bank to world countries. Delivery of the mail will take place at the King Hussein Bridge. Another agreement allows Palestinian trucks and buses to enter Jordan and transit through to other Arab countries (Al Aswaj).

Manufacturers of school uniforms were turned away disappointed by the Ministry of Supply after they rushed to seeking higher prices claiming higher cost of textile inputs and double taxation from the implementation of the sales tax. Failing to justify higher costs and after hearing a convincing explanation of the tax issue from officials in the ministry, the manufacturers settled to keep the price of school uniforms unchanged (Al Ra'i).

Workers at the Jordan Electric Power Co. are demanding higher pay and other fringe benefits such as the continuation of the discounts on the electricity bills of their homes and payment of allowances for carrying out risky work (Al Ra'i).

Taxpayers who pay the 1994 income tax before the end of this month are entitled to a six per cent discount. Even making an advance payment can be considered for the discount on condition that the necessary forms are presented before April 15 (Al Ra'i).

Studies have been prepared to revive the Hijaz railway scheme to connect the Kingdom with all neighbouring countries and to make Jordan as a centre for trade leaving for Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Israel. The studies also aim at turning Hijaz railway into a tourist attraction. The railway would stretch from Amman to Jazirah in the short-term, from the north of Jordan to the south, passing through Azraq, Qasr Al Mashta, Cerec and most of the towns and cities. According to Burhan Shreideh, director general of the Hijaz Railway Corporation, Jordan's aim at present is to connect the Kingdom by rail with Arab Gulf countries. Shreideh said it would be a major achievement for Jordan. Jerash-Rumayra were to be linked to various parts of the country with a railway service. He said studies were being finished in that direction, no doubt such a project would cost about 100 million (Al Ra'i).

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

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Dubai's aluminium firm to raise capacity, seeks \$250m loan

DUBAI (R) — Dubai's aluminium company Dnabai said it will raise output capacity 52 per cent to 372,600 tonnes per year by 1997 in a \$500 million project partly funded with a loan underwritten by Merrill Lynch, the company said.

The Dubai statement sent to Reuters said Dnabai, which has a current production capacity of 245,000 tonnes per year, would finance the other 50 per cent of the total costs of the project.

Local and foreign banks would participate in the syndicated \$250 million five-year loan, which Merrill Lynch would also arrange, the statement said.

Dubai declined in early 1994 to join efforts by other world aluminium producers, including Bahrain's Alba, to restrain output to boost what were at that time sagging prices.

Prices have since recovered, moving to a 5-1/4 year high of \$2,170 in London on Friday from \$1,230 in January 1994.

Dubai said at the time that it had already committed to selling all of its 1994 output. Dubai, owned by the Dubai government, produced 242,264 tonnes of primary metal in 1993.

Dubai said the project involves construction of a fifth portline with a total capacity of 127,600 tonnes per year. It includes installing two gas turbines each with 110 megawatt capacity to meet expanded electricity needs, the statement said.

Dubai will also construct a second green anode production line, kiln line, casting machine, a casting pit and other technology designed and developed by Comalco of Australia and Dubai.

Crisis looms over spiralling paper prices

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A crisis seems to be looming for school notebooks in Jordan as international prices of paper are going up and local booksellers accuse local manufacturers of trying to raise their prices without government approval.

The Ministry of Supply, which determines prices of notebooks, said it had heard of the problem but had not been approached by any manufacturers with a formal request to raise prices.

Manufacturers assert they are no longer able to produce and market notebooks at the prices set by the Ministry of Supply because raw material costs have gone up dramatically in the last six months.

If the situation remained unaddressed, they say, they will be forced to stop production if only to avert losses.

Caught in-between are parents and schoolchildren who, more often than not in the past month, had to pay prices higher than those set by the ministry.

Bookshops say many of them are selling notebooks with no profit at all because of the need to stock the books if only to attract customers who might also be buying something else from the shops.

The only consensus among all is that prices for paper went up by 50 per cent to 80 per cent, particularly Brazilian paper which is widely used to make school workbooks, in the second half of 1994.

Awmi Adel Yousef, general manager of Al Hail Company, one of the leading manufacturers in Jordan, said his company was unable to make any profits.

"But we are keeping up our production and marketing

our products at the prices set by the government," said Mr. Yousef. "We operate by the philosophy that sometimes you lose, sometimes you gain."

According to Mr. Yousef, whose company buys papers from Brazil, a tonne of paper now costs nearly \$800 compared with \$600 six months ago, but there has been no rise in local prices.

Al Hail, which produces ruled 32 page and 64-page notebooks, sells the products at the set prices of 35 fils and 92 fils respectively, Mr. Yousef insisted.

However, "this situation cannot continue any longer since we are unable to absorb any more losses," Mr. Yousef told the Jordan Times.

Al Hail may be an exception to the rule, but several booksellers said manufacturers were insisting on the retail prices printed on the books as

their wholesale price.

A bookseller cited an example. He said that the price set by the ministry for a ruled workbook of 80 pages was 115 fils, but the distributors of the book were insisting that the retailer buys the book at this price.

"This would mean we, the booksellers, selling the books either at 115 fils or at a higher price and risk being penalised by the Ministry of Supply," said the bookseller, who did not want to be identified.

"Many of us prefer not to make any profit and remain within the confines of the law, hoping that the very availability of the books with us will attract customers who might buy something else where we can make some profit," he added.

Abdullah Al Geeth, head of the Department of Studies at the Ministry of Supply, said: "There has been no decision to raise the prices of notebooks and the issue is

not under study."

The ministry will be ready to discuss the issue "if the manufacturers go through the proper channel and produce their purchase invoices and customs papers to prove their case," the official told the Jordan Times.

"We can then conduct proper studies and review the case for higher prices, but until a formal approach is made nothing can be done in the paper," he said.

In the meantime, parents who wanted notebooks for their children after the recent holiday say that some booksellers were demanding higher prices.

"If you look like a customer who might pay a higher price, they (the booksellers) say they have the books but at a price more than set by the ministry," said one parent. "If they think you might make an argument, then they say they do not have the books at all."

Arms makers eye Middle East market at major defence show

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Major arms manufacturers will vie for a greater share of the growing Middle East military market when they display their latest defence wares at an international show here in March.

Firms from the United States, Britain, France, Russia and South Africa will make up more than half of about 510 companies due to take part in the March 19-23 ground weapons show in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), organisers said.

The five countries and other participants will also display frigates, destroyers and other vessels at the neighbouring Abu Dhabi Port Yared but it was not clear if they would include submarines.

"The show will be an important opportunity for regional countries to see the latest in military industries and for producers to promote their hardware," said an official from the organising committee. "There is no doubt it will include deals but not all of them would be announced."

The UAE armed forces are staging the show in Abu Dhabi, the second in two years. It covers only vessels and ground weapons, including tanks, as an international air show is held every two years

in nearby Dubai.

The show comes as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other regional states pressed ahead with plans to bolster their defence capabilities following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Iran's armament plans including the acquisition of Russian submarines, the first to be bought by a regional country.

Western nations and their Arab Gulf allies have voiced concern at Iran's growing power and its belligerent statements, criticising the allied naval presence in the Gulf and its island dispute with the UAE.

During a Gulf tour last week, British Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Iran's purchase of the Kilo-class submarines could destabilise the oil-rich region but he urged Tehran not to use them against its neighbours.

The six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has become one of the biggest arms buyers, spending more than \$50 billion on defence after the invasion of Kuwait and plans to spend billions more by 2000.

They have focused on advanced weapons to offset a troop shortage due to their relatively small native populations.

| Financial Markets | | In co-operation with | | Cairo Amman Bank | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------|------------------|--|
| U.S. Dollar in International Markets | | New York Close | | Dubai 24/1/95 | |
| Currency | | 23/1/95 | 24/1/95 | | |
| Sterling Pound | | 1.5840 | 1.5952 | | |
| Deutsche Mark | | 1.5145 | 1.5137 | | |
| Swiss Franc | | 1.2703 | 1.2717 | | |
| French Franc | | 5.2425 | 5.2400 | | |
| Japanese Yen | | 99.81 | 99.75 | | |
| European Currency Unit | | 1.2493 | 1.2497 | | |

| Eurocurrency Interest Rates | | Dubai: 24/1/1995 | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Currency | | 1 MTH | 3 MTHS | 6 MTHS | 12 MTHS |
| U.S. Dollar | | 5.75 | 6.00 | 6.50 | 7.00 |
| Sterling Pound | | 5.93 | 6.31 | 6.75 | 7.37 |
| Deutsche Mark | | 4.68 | 4.81 | 5.06 | 5.56 |
| Swiss Franc | | 3.62 | 3.81 | 4.06 | 4.37 |
| French Franc | | 5.37 | 5.67 | 6.06 | 6.62 |
| Japanese Yen | | 2.06 | 2.06 | 2.06 | 2.25 |
| European Currency Unit | | 5.75 | 6.06 | 6.40 | 7.00 |

| Precious Metals | | Dubai: 24/1/1995 | | | |
|-----------------|--------|------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Metal | USD/Oz | JD/Gm | Metal | USD/Oz | JD/Gm |
| Gold | 381.65 | 7.65 | Silver | 4.82 | 0.177 |

| Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin | | Dubai: 24/1/1995 | |
|---|--|------------------|--------|
| Currency | | Bid | Offer |
| U.S. Dollar | | 0.6960 | 0.6980 |
| Sterling Pound | | 1.1097 | 1.1152 |
| Deutsche Mark | | 0.3593 | 0.4617 |
| Swiss Franc | | 0.5474 | 0.5501 |
| French Franc | | 0.1327 | 0.1353 |
| Japanese Yen | | 0.0074 | 0.0099 |
| Dutch Guilder | | 0.4097 | 0.4117 |
| Swedish Krona | | ***** | ***** |
| Italian Lira | | 0.0439 | 0.0441 |
| Belgian Franc | | ***** | ***** |

| Other Currencies | | Dubai: 24/1/1995 | |
|------------------|--|------------------|----------|
| Currency | | Bid | Offer |
| Bahraini Dinar | | 1.8304 | 1.8430 |
| Lebanese Lira | | 0.041125 | 0.042370 |
| Saudi Riyal | | 0.1850 | 0.1863 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | | 2.3170 | 2.3680 |
| Qatari Riyal | | 0.1900 | 0.1913 |
| Egyptian Pound | | 0.2000 | 0.2140 |
| Omani Riyal | | 1.7090 | 1.8100 |
| UAE Dirham | | 0.1889 | 0.1898 |
| Greek Drachma | | 0.0006 | 0.0020 |
| Cypriot Pound | | 1.4410 | 1.5500 |

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

| U.S. \$1.00 costs | | Canadian dollar |
|-------------------|--|------------------|
| 1.4162/72 | | Deutsche marks |
| 1.5058/08 | | Dutch guilders |
| 1.6932/42 | | Swiss francs |
| 1.2670/80 | | Belgian francs |
| 31.13/17 | | French francs |
| 5.2258/08 | | Italian lire |
| 1584.8/5.8 | | Japanese yen |
| 99.48/58 | | Swedish crowns |
| 7.4250/50 | | Norwegian crowns |
| 6.6040/90 | | Danish crowns |
| 5.9550/00 | | |
| \$1.5994/04 | | |
| One sterling | | |
| One ounce of gold | | |

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| JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET | | BOOSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SECTION 1 | |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 24/01/1995 | | | |
| COMPANY'S NAME | NO. OF SHARES TRADED | VALUE TRADED JD | CLOSING PRICE |
| ARAB BANK | 42 | 7420 | 184.500 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK | 11312 | 50938 | 4.460 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW | 4644 | 19816 | 4.280 |
| MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK | 500 | 775 | 1.550 |
| THE HOUSING BANK | 12200 | 74716 | 5.030 |
| JORDAN KIWAT BANK | 4589 | 13978 | 3.050 |
| JORDAN GULF BANK | 2675 | 4206 | 1.580 |
| JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK | 40224 | 154857 | 3.830 |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK | 365 | 3843 | 4.300 |
| BEST KHAL SAVINGS INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING | 500 | 1632 | 3.250 |
| ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT | 46620 | 66738 | 1.470 |
| PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK | 500 | 2440 | 1.950 |
| BANKS SECTOR | 124496 | 405055 | INDEX NUMBER: 160.47 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER | 6700 | 10385 | 1.540 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW | 1790 | 2598 | 1.480 |
| ARAB INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE | 101169 | 4950 | 5.100 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES | 28600 | 97012 | 3.410 |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 1250 | 2936 | 2.310 |
| JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 11656 | 14328 | 1.220 |
| UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMPASSION HOTELS | 1100 | 2573 | 2.410 |
| ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION | 4800 | 17573 | 3.570 |
| SERVICES SECTOR | 75748 | 248672 | INDEX NUMBER: 135.28 |
| JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES | 700 | 19243 | 26.180 |
| THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES | 4239 | 12467 | 2.940 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM MINES | 400 | 1152 | 2.900 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY | 2030 | 19489 | 9.560 |
| THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL | 400 | 1724 | 4.330 |
| THE JORDAN WOOLLEN MILLS | 150 | 1183 | 7.900 |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING | 3565 | 17773 | 5.300 |
| JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES | 1400 | 8713 | 6.150 |
| JORDAN DAIRY | 10250 | 23575 | 2.300 |
| THE JORDAN WIPES MANUFACTURING | 1850 | 5097 | 2.750 |
| SPINNING & WEAVING | 500 | 1323 | 2.620 |
| RAPIA INDUSTRIES | 5150 | 14453 | 2.790 |
| ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE | 500 | 515 | 1.040 |
| ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES | 500 | 3565 | 7.150 |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 93750 | 81563 | 8.870 |
| ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING | 1000 | 1430 | 1.440 |
| NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES | 1600 | 6640 | 4.100 |
| INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 150 | 405 | 2.700 |
| UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 750 | 3000 | 4.000 |
| ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES | 2300 | 10262 | 4.450 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIES & WIPES/INCO | 4000 | 3240 | 810 |
| ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS | 100 | 270 | 2.730 |
| KAWTHER INVESTMENT | 890 | 1583 | 1.800 |
| UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES | 2000 | 8350 | 4.200 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO. | 17575 | 59176 | 3.220 |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR | 155561 | 286229 | INDEX NUMBER: 127.69 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 355805 | 935407 | INDEX NUMBER: 145.07 |
| NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET | | 251216 | |
| VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET | | 293653 | |

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Jerry Rice considers retirement if 49ers win Super Bowl

MIAMI (AP) — It's almost enough to make San Francisco fans root against their team.

All-pro receiver Jerry Rice says he may retire if the 49ers beat San Diego in Sunday's Super Bowl.

"I'd like to put off that retirement, I can assure you," Chargers coach Bobby Ross said with a smile.

Rice, 32, opened the door to an early exit when he answered a question at a news conference Monday about the possibility of retirement.

"That might be something to think about," Rice said. "If I think the fire is still inside, I'll continue to play. If it's gone, it's time to walk away from the game."

The 49ers believe Rice has plenty of fire — and National Football League seasons — remaining. Coach George Seifert, for one, doubts that his perennial pro bowl receiver will quit.

"That's the first time I've heard any mention of that," Seifert said. "I'd be surprised if that's what he did."

Health isn't an issue. He last missed a game in 1987.

"I feel like a youngster," he said. "If anything, I'm in better shape than when I first came in."

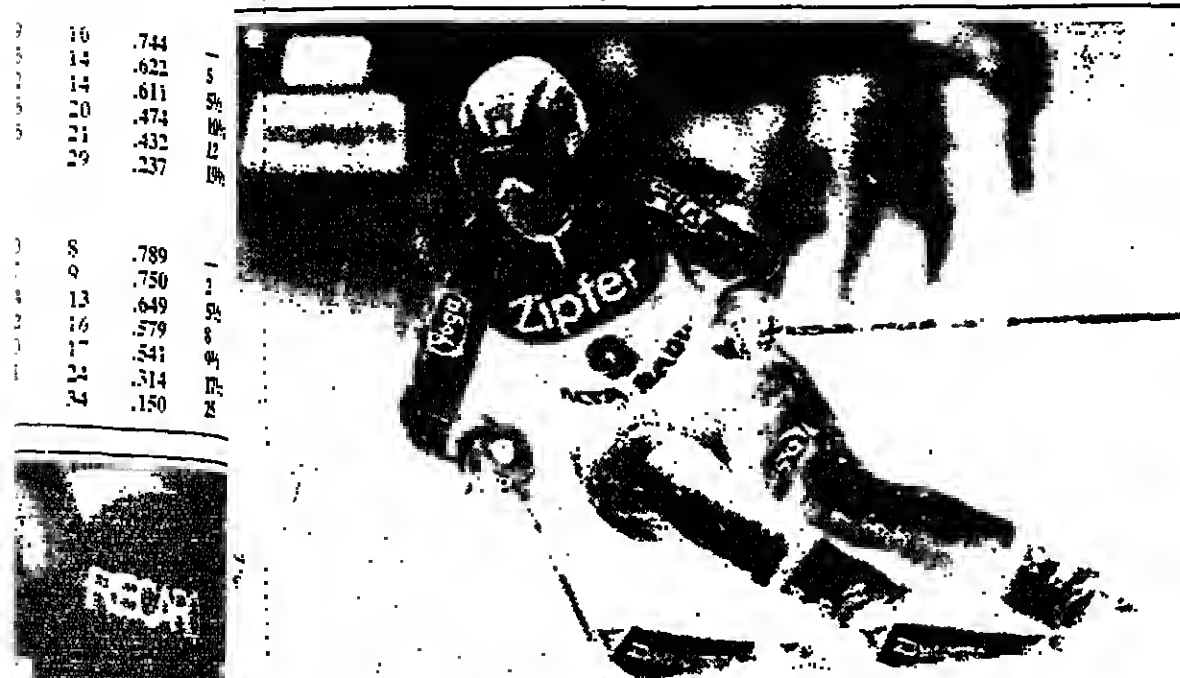
Diminished skills aren't an issue. Rice this season made 112 receptions, the best total of his 10-year career, for 1,499 yards and 13 touchdowns. He broke Jim Brown's NFL record for career touchdowns and was named a Pro Bowl starter for the ninth consecutive time.

In the National Football Conference championship victory over Dallas, Rice made the game's biggest play — a 28-yard touchdown catch with eight seconds left in the first half.

Against the Chargers in December, he caught 12 passes for 144 yards.

"Jerry Rice is at the top of his game right now," San Diego safety Stanley Richard said. "He can pretty much do what he wants to do. He can play another five or 10 years, if he wants to."

The Chargers arrived in Florida Monday as 19 point underdogs, the highest spread in football history.



Italy's Sabina Panzanini

World Alpine Ski Championships

Coaches and athletes struggling to prepare for alternatives

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP) — With only a week to go to the World Alpine Ski Championships in Sierra Nevada, coaches and athletes are struggling to prepare for races still uncertain because of warm weather.

It has been an extremely mild season for Sierra Nevada, Europe's most southern winter resort, with rain rather than snow falling over the weekend. Temperatures haven't even been cold enough to make the needed artificial snow.

"As it looks right now, the only thing I'm concerned about is the safety — there is not much snow and outside the course there are only rocks to slide into," said Canada's Kate Pace, the defending world downhill champion.

Organisers have postponed making a decision on whether to hold the races several times already potting the teams, many of which planned to leave as early as Monday into a holding pattern.

The International Ski Federation (FIS) said it would announce its final verdict on Jan. 26, only three days before the opening ceremonies are to be held.

The U.S. team's head coach Herwig Demischer headed to Sierra Nevada Saturday to see for himself.

Coaches are also worried about what to do with their athletes when they arrive in Spain and have no prepared tracks to train on.

Some athletes, such as two-time Olympic champion Deborah Compagnoni of Italy, may be forced to return home to practice on snow-covered slopes in between the different events that are spread out over a two week period.

"Either I decide it is possible to train, or if I see no chance I'll keep them in Europe until the 27th," said Demischer.

For the American women waiting on the decision means passing up a three day break at the beach on Spain's sunny coast.

Germany's Katja Seizinger who leads the World Cup overall standings said she would only think about the

championships on Thursday, when FIS makes a decision.

However, she isn't afraid to set her sights on the medals: "I hope to win at the world championships even though the runs there are very easy — I like more technical courses," she said.

The Americans are some of the race favourites considering their stellar results so far this season. Hilary Lindh and Picabo Street have both won three out of a total of five world cup downhill races.

After winning her second career World Cup downhill in Cortina, Street said, "I hope we have them (the World Championships), that's all I can say."

Lindh won the World Cup downhill in Sierra Nevada last year and Street predicts strong results for her team.

"She is really confident," said street of Lindh.

The Canadians have already rearranged their travel plans, delaying their departure and opting to stay in Cortina until a final decision is made.

"The important thing is to stay flexible and relaxed," said Demischer who also counts on having the World Championships held as planned.

Organisers have touched on several alternatives should conditions in Spain not be suitable by the Jan. 26 deadline: The championships could be delayed until later in the year.

"I know we're going to hear about that all week," coach Bobby Ross said after the Chargers' charter flight arrived Monday night. "I've never seen one that was decided by the media, yet."

"We honestly think we can win the game. That's why people are buying tickets for it. I told our squad this morning, first and foremost, we're coming down to win this football game."

The Chargers relish their underdog status, which they've faced several times this season.

Linebacker David Griggs, who used to play for the Miami Dolphins, said the Chargers aren't getting the respect they deserve, but understands why.

"The 49ers won, what, four Super bowls, and the Chargers haven't won any. It's our first time here, and for the past 10 years the AFC has gotten stomped. So of course we're going to be the underdogs," Griggs said.

"But it's motivational for us. They're not unbeatable."

It was past one o'clock in the morning before Sampras was able to nail down his 10th victory in 14 matches against Courier and secure himself a semifinal against another American, Michael Chang.

Chang beat an ailing Andre Medvedev in three tough sets Tuesday at the Australian Open, clinching the third Grand Slam semifinal appearance of his career.

The 22-year-old American downed Medvedev 7-6 (9-7), 7-5, 6-3 after the Ukrainian was hampered by an injury to his left wrist he suffered during the first set.

Medvedev, seeded 13th, lunged for the ball in the eighth point of the first-set tiebreaker and fell heavily. He was treated several times and the potency of his threat faded as the match progressed.

The right-hander appeared to have trouble with his ball toss after the fall and said the wrist felt numb when he hit double-handed backhands.

"It was painful, but I could play, more or less," said Medvedev. "It took a little while to adjust to the pain, but it wasn't the reason that I lost."

Chang has dropped only one set in his first five matches at the open, where he had not previously made it past the third round.

"It was an awkward match — a very up-and-down match," Chang said. "In the first two sets a couple of points here and there could have turned it around."

The win took Chang two hours and 23 minutes. Both men played mainly from the baseline but Medvedev made considerably more errors — 31 to his rival's 48.

"It was a good match for me to have to battle," Chang said. "I feel like I'm in pretty good shape, physically and

mentally."

Medvedev had his chances to win. He had a set point in the first set and served for the second — but didn't take the opportunities.

Chang, who was treated during the match for what appeared to be a groin strain, wavered briefly in the third set.

Medvedev came back from 0-5 to 3-5 before dropping his own serve and the match.

Chang's victory ensured at least one American will reach the men's singles finals. The No. 5 seed will now face Sampras.

Chang won the 1989 French Open and last made the semis of a slam at the 1992 U.S. Open.

Chang said his injury was "nothing too serious" — but declined to elaborate.

"We'll leave it at that," he said. "Jim and Pete read the papers."

Mary Pierce earlier overcame Natasha Zvereva in just 62 minutes — advancing to her second Grand Slam semifinal.

Pierce will face No. 2 seed Conchita Martinez of Spain in the semifinals.

Wimbledon champion Martinez moved into her first Australian Open semifinal with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win in one hour-41 minutes over 18-year-old American Lindsay Davenport, the No. 6 seed.

Davenport made 30 unforced errors to just 26 from Martinez.

Pierce, the No. 1 seed from France, hit the ball deep and hard, moving a frustrated Zvereva around the court to win 6-1, 6-4.

Pierce, 20, raced through the first set in just 20 minutes, dropping only the fifth game, and then pulled away from 4-4 in the second set after Zvereva briefly rallied from 2-4.

"In the first set I was pretty happy," Pierce said. "I was very aggressive but I got a bit impatient in the second, made a few mistakes and got upset with myself."

Pierce was successful with 84 per cent of her first serves, hit 25 winners to just 11 from No. 8 Zvereva, and won the point 10 of the 12 times she approached the net.

"She was extremely confident, blasting balls everywhere," Zvereva said. "Everything went in. There was a feeling coming across the net from her. She's pumped up."

Pierce was given a time violation warning on match point as she prepared to serve, but she clinched the point and the match with a backhand down the line before running to the net with her fist clenched in triumph.

"It didn't bother me at all," Pierce said. "It was just a warning."

Martinez said she was enjoying the experience of playing outdoors after struggling in indoor tournaments during the second half of 1994.

"I'm feeling very confident and playing tennis at the moment," she said. "It's great to be in the semis here for the first time."

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Australian Open

Sampras downs Courier to keep title hopes alive

Chang, Martinez, Pierce progress into semifinals

MELBOURNE (Agencies) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras extended his extraordinary defence of his Australian Open title with an emotional moonlit victory over twice champion Jim Courier at Flinders Park Tuesday.

Sampras staged a brilliant comeback from two sets down for the second time in successive matches to clinch a 6-7 6-3 6-4 6-3 victory over his fellow American in the tournament's most dramatic match for some years.

The top-seeded Sampras, whose coach Tim Gullikson flew home in the morning after five days in a Melbourne hospital, spent much of the final set fighting back tears as the strain of the past week suddenly caught up with him.

Television microphones apparently picked up a spectator shouting "do it for your coach" at the start of the fifth set, while Sampras also received treatment for a foot injury during a contest which lasted one minute short of four hours.

It was past one o'clock in the morning before Sampras was able to nail down his 10th victory in 14 matches against Courier and secure himself a semifinal against another American, Michael Chang.

Chang beat an ailing Andre Medvedev in three tough sets Tuesday at the Australian Open, clinching the third Grand Slam semifinal appearance of his career.

The 22-year-old American downed Medvedev 7-6 (9-7), 7-5, 6-3 after the Ukrainian was hampered by an injury to his left wrist he suffered during the first set.

Medvedev, seeded 13th, lunged for the ball in the eighth point of the first-set tiebreaker and fell heavily. He was treated several times and the potency of his threat faded as the match progressed.

The right-hander appeared to have trouble with his ball toss after the fall and said the wrist felt numb when he hit double-handed backhands.

"It was painful, but I could play, more or less," said Medvedev. "It took a little while to adjust to the pain, but it wasn't the reason that I lost."

Chang has dropped only one set in his first five matches at the open, where he had not previously made it past the third round.

"It was an awkward match — a very up-and-down match," Chang said. "In the first two sets a couple of points here and there could have turned it around."

The win took Chang two hours and 23 minutes. Both men played mainly from the baseline but Medvedev made considerably more errors — 31 to his rival's 48.

"It was a good match for me to have to battle," Chang said. "I feel like I'm in pretty good shape, physically and

mentally."

Medvedev had his chances to win. He had a set point in the first set and served for the second — but didn't take the opportunities.

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Chang's victory ensured at least one American will reach the men's singles finals. The No. 5 seed will now face Sampras.

Chang won the 1989 French Open and last made the semis of a slam at the 1992 U.S. Open.

Chang said his injury was "nothing too serious" — but declined to elaborate.

"We'll leave it at that," he said. "Jim and Pete read the papers."

Mary Pierce earlier overcame Natasha Zvereva in just 62 minutes — advancing to her second Grand Slam semifinal.

Pierce will face No. 2 seed Conchita Martinez of Spain in the semifinals.

Wimbledon champion Martinez moved into her first Australian Open semifinal with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win in one hour-41 minutes over 18-year-old American Lindsay Davenport, the No. 6 seed.

Davenport made 30 unforced errors to just 26 from Martinez.

Pierce, the No. 1 seed from France, hit the ball deep and hard, moving a frustrated Zvereva around the court to win 6-1, 6-4.

Pierce, 20, raced through the first set in just 20 minutes, dropping only the fifth game, and then pulled away from 4-4 in the second set after Zvereva briefly rallied from 2-4.

"In the first set I was pretty happy," Pierce said. "I was very aggressive but I got a bit impatient in the second, made a few mistakes and got upset with myself."

Pierce was successful with 84 per cent of her first serves, hit 25 winners to just 11 from No. 8 Zvereva, and won the point 10 of the 12 times she approached the net.

"She was extremely confident, blasting balls everywhere," Zvereva said. "Everything went in. There was a feeling coming across the net from her. She's pumped up."

Pierce was given a time violation warning on match point as she prepared to serve, but she clinched the point and the match with a backhand down the line before running to the net with her fist clenched in triumph.

"It didn't bother me at all," Pierce said. "It was just a warning."

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